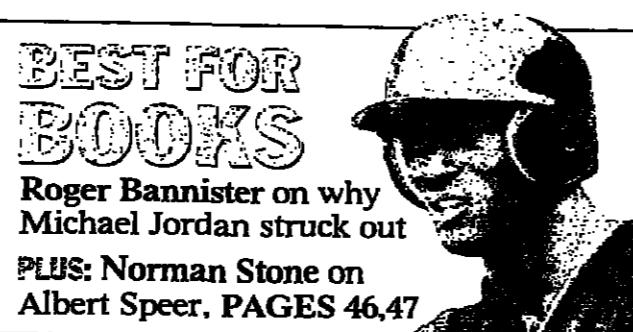




FLASHY WRAPPING

Iain R. Webb
peels away the
Paris Fashion
Week glamour
PAGES 20,21



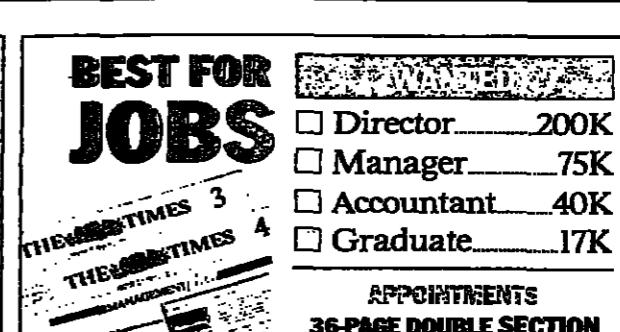
BEST FOR BOOKS

Roger Bannister on why
Michael Jordan struck out
PLUS: Norman Stone on
Albert Speer, PAGES 46,47



STONE AGE MILLIONAIRES

Oilwells
turn the
Huli Wig Men
into tycoons
PAGE 18



BEST FOR JOBS

36-PAGE DOUBLE SECTION
TONY FISHER / DAILY STAR

Labour tries to extend session

Blair attacks sleaze report 'suppression'

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR last night led an unprecedented move to prevent Parliament rising for the general election tomorrow, in an attempt to force publication of the report on the cash-for-questions affair.

Mr Blair was joined by Paddy Ashdown, other minority leaders and the entire Shadow Cabinet in signing motions calling for the present session to be extended amid claims that the Government had deliberately timed the prorogation to delay publication of the report until after the election.

The report into allegations of sleaze against MPs, including the former ministers Neil

Hamilton and Tim Smith, will be ready next week. But Sir Gordon Downey, the Commissioner for Standards, cannot present it to MPs when Parliament is not sitting.

Even the Queen was embroiled in the dispute when it was disclosed that she had already signed the papers providing for the prorogation tomorrow, so the date could not be changed. But Labour contested that assertion and the Government later accepted that the Queen could be asked to vary the timing.

It was nevertheless clear that the Government had no intention of giving way and as ministers refused demands for

the session to be extended, the Speaker told MPs that it was "constitutionally simply not possible" for the Committee on Standards and Privileges to continue its work after the prorogation.

The Conservatives were furious, claiming that the row had been deliberately staged to take the gloss off yesterday's sharp fall in unemployment. Ministers described as slanderous the suggestion that the election timing had anything to do with Sir Gordon's report, and Dr Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, accused Labour of playing dirty politics.

He said: "Mr Blair and Mr Brown look for a smear, look for a diversion to stop the people of Britain focusing on the good news. You are now seeing the first example of the Labour Party playing dirty politics."

A senior government source said that the Opposition was assuming that the report would be publishable immediately after Sir Gordon handed it to the committee. But that was unlikely to be the case; the committee could well wish to interview key witnesses again.

The source said: "This report goes back over all the Al-Fayed-Rowland feud over 20 years. How do you unravel that in a day?"

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Election 97, pages 12,13
William Rees-Mogg, page 24
Leading article and
Letters, page 25
Pennington, page 31
Graham Searjeant, page 33

admitted that he received more payments from the lobbyist Ian Greer than he at first acknowledged, and he will be criticised for misleading Parliament in Sir Gordon Downey's report on the affair.

Sir Michael, the MP for Surrey North West, told the now defunct Privileges committee's investigation into lobbying in April 1990, that he had received three payments from Mr Greer for introducing new business.

But both Sir Michael and Mr Greer later told Sir Gordon's confidential investigation.

Continued on page 2, col 5

Ex-minister admits to £18,000 payment

By ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER minister who resigned after being paid to ask parliamentary questions for Mohammed Al Fayed has admitted that he received three times as much money as had been previously been thought.

Tim Smith, a former Conservative Party treasurer, has told a Commons investigation that he accepted £18,000 from the Harrods owner. Although no figure had been confirmed in the past, it was assumed that Mr Smith had received fees totalling £6,000.

The senior Tory backbencher Sir Michael Grylls has also



Cherie Blair and Norma Major "very deep in conversation" at the Daily Star Gold Awards at the Savoy Hotel in London yesterday

Leading ladies rise above politics

By CAROL MIDDLETON

POLITICAL rivalry was off the menu yesterday as Norma Major and Cherie Blair met for lunch. The general election was ignored while the two joined forces to present awards for bravery.

As their husbands hit the campaign trail, the wives shook hands, posed for photographs and chatted like old friends at the Savoy Hotel in London, where they were joined at their table by Diana, Princess of Wales. It was only

the third time that Mrs Major and Mrs Blair had met, but onlookers said they were very deep in conversation. "Their greeting was genuinely warm and they actually made a good double act," said one guest.

Their outfits, too, did not clash. Mrs Major wore a fuchsia-pink suit with knee-length skirt while Mrs Blair wore a black trouser-suit and black silk ruffled blouse. The Princess wore a pastel-pink jacket and above-the-knee skirt,

and virtually ignored the bank of photographers outside the hotel.

There was a tense moment when a photographer asked Mrs Blair if she would pose for a picture with Mrs Major. She readily agreed but Mrs Major initially appeared uncertain. They had a private chat and the photo opportunity was granted.

The Prime Minister's wife was first to present six Gold Stars, rationing her kisses to one peck on the cheek for Jane Winslow, 12, from Grimsby, who sold

her toys to raise money for her grandfather's cancer treatment.

Mrs Blair, said observers, hugged the winners and seemed tearful as she gave awards to two from Dunblane, as well as to Lisa Potts, the nurse who risked her life to shield children from a machete-wielding man.

The Princess gave an award to Chris Moon, 33, who lost his right leg and hand clearing mines in Mozambique. He has since run three marathons to raise money to ban landmines.

Architecture prize for self-taught man

By MARCUS BINNEY

TADAO ANDO, an unqualified and entirely self-taught Japanese designer who cannot call himself an architect in Britain, has won the country's most prestigious prize for architecture.

In a move that will bring hope to thousands of similar designers and technicians forbidden to describe themselves as architects, the Royal Institute of British Architects has awarded Mr Ando its 1997 Royal Gold Medal.

With Sir Norman Foster, Mr Ando counts as one of world architecture's top stars. Although he has never taken any architectural exams, he has scooped one of the world's top awards, including the £15,000 Pritzker Prize, and the even more valuable Japanese Premium Imperiale.

The RIBA medal brings no money, but it is the oldest

De Kooning dies in his studio

Willem de Kooning, a dominant figure in the abstract expressionist art movement, died in his New York studio. He was 92.

The Dutch-born painter, whose works included the black and white *Night Square* and the colourful *Woman*, influenced the New York School that came to prominence after the War.

Doctor jailed for indecent assault

A doctor has been jailed for three months after putting his hand up a nurse's skirt. Philip Sugarman, 32, of West Didsbury, Manchester, who was engaged to be married, indecently assaulted the woman as she leaned over at the Royal Oldham Hospital, Manchester. Page 3

Italian crisis

Italy declared a state of emergency until June 30 to cope with the influx of more than 10,000 refugees from Albania. Page 15

Call of the Bar

The 120 places on the new Bar vocational course being run by the College of Law in September are being chased by 1,500 students. Page 9

Briton tells of SAS Albania rescue

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A BRITISH aid worker described yesterday how he was rescued by the SAS from rebel-held southern Albania and flown out to safety in an RAF Chinook helicopter.

Richard Welch, working for the Bedworth Christian Centre in Warwickshire, had been trapped in the village of Borsh, near Sarande, since March 1 after people looted an arms depot. He and another Briton contacted the British Embassy in Tirana to let officials know they were desperate to be rescued.

Soldiers from the SAS Regiment flew out to Albania last week to protect the embassy and its ambassador, Andrew Tresorier. They arrived with RAF Chinooks in case they had to help stranded Britons.

The 39-year-old aid worker from Dudley, West Midlands, was told to meet the SAS team. He said yesterday: "I contacted

another Briton in a nearby village and we both met up at the rendezvous point. Two Land Rovers were there and they were being driven by SAS soldiers in plain clothes. We drove five miles to the coast through roadblocks, without any trouble, and suddenly two helicopters came down."

About 25 SAS men in full combat gear came out and spread around the ground "like ants, taking up battle positions. The soldiers were very self-effacing and very modest. But they thanked me because they were glad to see some action and said they had been coming to get me."

The two Britons were flown to Tirana and then across to Bari in Italy, before returning to England.

Mr Welch said that when the arms depot was looted Borsh was "suddenly filled with anti-tank missiles, guns, rifles and machine-guns. When I left, people from outside were trying to buy a machine gun for \$200," he said.

Bedworth Christian Centre in Warwickshire sent 100 young people to Albania last year to help to renovate a school and a hospital. Mr Welch said he hoped to return.

The Foreign Office confirmed that two Britons and an American had been rescued by British soldiers in RAF helicopters. It added that all the Britons who wanted to leave had now been rescued.

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THE CANON BJC-240

Missing peer tracked down to secret Westminster lair

B rush aside the news of a general election. Yesterday this sketch-writer stumbled over a much bigger story. We may have sighted Lord Lucan.

I had looked in on the Upper Chamber to watch an oft-forgotten legislature whose session also approaches its close. The Lords' Chamber was full, the atmosphere boisterous.

Electron had penetrated even to this mild and rational place. As I entered, their Lordships were moaning angrily at each other about unemployment, the minimum wage and the social chapter.

Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, a

Trade and Industry Minister, was fielding questions in a knockout mood more redolent of the Commons than the Lords. A Tory peer, the Viscount of Oxford, had asked what can only be described as a pooling question, though from a very noble poodle. Hyundai were creating 2,000 jobs in Dunfermline. What prospect of such investment under the job-destroying policies of the party opposite?

"My Noble Friend is absolutely right!" cooed Lord Fraser. Readers unfamiliar with the drawing-room ambience of the Other Place may not realise just how weird this

sort of exchange sounds in the Lords.

Other peers rose. Tory Lords threw the windfall tax, Siemens and Scottish prosperity at the Opposition. Labour and Liberal Democrat Lords retaliated with MORI polls and French inward investment figures. Lord Beloff (a retired academic) told Labour's Lord Peston (another retired academic) that he hoped he would never go back

to teaching economics, as he did not understand it. Lord Fraser told Lord Peston he hoped he *did* return to teaching — after his party had lost the election. Lord Fraser read our figures for the latest fall in unemployment, and all the Tory Lords and Ladies shouted "Hurrah!"

And we moved to a defence question.

Readers may remember that a man described as the

Earl Atlee, grandson of the former Labour Prime Minister, has recently joined the Conservative Party. Yesterday he made his first contribution from the government benches in the Lords. What, we wondered, was he bursting to say? Might we be about to hear what had pushed him to this

rebellion?

There was a hush as he rose.

Lord Atlee had a pale, waxy complexion, a moustache, dark hair (receding) and a long nose. He spoke in a deadpan voice. And now a new speculation gripped me.

Was this Lord Lucan?

One had, after all, never

heard of an "Earl Atlee" before a fortnight ago. He seemed suddenly to have appeared.

From where? From hiding?

Photographs of Lord Lucan

suggest a lower brow, but

these were taken some years

ago: the hair will have receded

since then. It should be grey by

now, but he may be dyed it.

His question was for the

Earl Howe, a Defence Minister.

One recalled his alleged

grandfather's record. Clement

Atlee was passionate for rear-

ment in the 30s, and secretly

authorised Britain's inde-

pendent nuclear deterrent in

the 1940s. Though the subject

was discussed was food sup-

plies to the Armed Forces, an

ingenious peer can always

nudge debate in the direc-

tion he desires. Perhaps his grand-

son (if this was his grandson)

sought modern reassurance

on some of the great issues

which had dominated his

grandfather's career?

He spoke. "My own TA

unit," he told their lordships,

"frequently received supplies

of beer that had very little

shelf-life left. It is very difficult

to drink large quantities of

beer in a short space of time."

Lord Atlee sat down. Peers

groaned. And that was it.

One had, after all, never

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bloody Sunday law threat

The Irish Government is considering legal action against Britain in the European courts if the investigation into the Bloody Sunday shootings is not reopened. Dick Spring, the Irish Deputy Prime Minister, said that a new investigation was needed to establish how the original report on the killing of 13 people by paratroopers in 1972, which exonerated the soldiers, had "got the facts so wrong". The Irish Government is compiling a dossier on the shootings to be sent to London, and sources said that legal action might be taken if the inquiry was not reopened.

Robinson backed

The Irish Government has formally nominated President Robinson for the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The decision, made at a cabinet meeting yesterday, will be followed by intensive lobbying by the Irish Prime Minister, Government and diplomats at the UN in Geneva and New York.

Gun man wins

Police have lost a legal fight to stop a Norfolk man from holding a gun licence. They claimed Robert Edwards, 44, was unfit to handle weapons because of a propensity to violence but a High Court judge disagreed. Police alleged that Mr Edwards beat the woman he lived with and had three convictions, two for using violence.

Crew blameless

An official investigation into the sailing tragedy last month in which two police officers and a teenager died has cleared the crew of blame. The 35ft yacht *Fairview Two* was on charter to the Metropolitan Police Sailing Club and returning to base in Hamble, Hampshire. It was struck by a freak wave, demasted and overturned.

Naafi relaunch

Britain's 200 Naafi stores are to be relaunched as Spar shops in all but name this summer, in an attempt to pull the troubled Navy, Army and Air Force retailer back into profit. Naafi will pay Spar, which looks after 2,500 independent grocery stores, an undisclosed sum to train managers, supply groceries and lend its brand name.

Cat killer guilty

A man who drop-kicked a neighbouring family's cat over a garden fence, killing it, was ordered to pay £270 compensation by magistrates in Leicester. Norman Inchley, 50, who was involved in a long-running feud, denied cruelty, saying he loved animals, but was convicted after another neighbour told of seeing the incident.

Selfless sacrifice

Doctor j
groping
hospita

Firefighters
made to pay
for sexual
bullying

Wor
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sta

Praise for CSA after 'unhappy birth'

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE Child Support Agency has substantially improved its performance since its "difficult and unhappy birth", but still has a big backlog of cases to deal with, MPs said yesterday.

The role of the CSA is to take lone parents, predominantly mothers, off benefit by making absent parents pay maintenance for their offspring. But figures in a report by the Social Security Select Committee showed that only about a third of lone parents on income support and family credit it had received an assessment.

Even this somewhat "battered" the agency, said the MPs. The total of lone parents on benefit — over 1.46 million in May 1996 — was a "snapshot" total, whereas the figure for the CSA caseload at the same point — 485,000 — was a "cumulative" total, including cases where absent parents were themselves getting benefit and were therefore readily accessible to the agency.

The report said the gap was partly explained by the number of cases cleared without assessment, including those where the CSA accepted lone parents' claims that they did not want to get involved because they feared retribution from a violent ex-partner. But by the end of December last year, said the MPs, the number of maintenance applications on hand was 441,784, "which includes a considerable backlog compared to an estimated 200,000 — 250,000 applications on hand that the agency would expect to have when at a 'steady state'".

The MPs praised the agency for a "significant improvement" in performance since the agency started work in 1993. The committee has previously described its administrative performance in its first 18 months as "dire", and the agency apologised to its clients for its shortcomings. "Whereas the agency was heading for disaster in 1993/94, there is now no danger that this could occur," the report said.

Major negotiates showdown debate with BBC and ITV

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A TELEVISION debate between John Major and Tony Blair seemed inevitable last night as the Prime Minister instructed his party chairman to start formal negotiations with both the BBC and ITV.

Senior Tory party sources unveiled details of the proposals from both TV channels but said that at present it favoured the ITV plans, as they were less "rigid" than those put forward by the BBC. Michael Dobbs, former vice-chairman of the Tory party, will be leading the debate team.

Neither plan involves a three-way debate with Paddy Ashdown, although the Liberal Democrat leader will be allocated a slot during a 90-

minute programme in both proposals. Under the BBC plan, Mr Major and Mr Blair would be involved in a 54-minute debate, chaired by David Dimbleby. The two leaders would be asked six questions each and be allowed two bites at the reply, following up each other's comments for nine minutes.

Mr Ashdown would then be interviewed for 16 minutes and there would be statements from all three leaders at the end. Under the ITV plan, all three leaders would make short opening statements and each leader would be asked one question. Then the Prime Minister would debate with Mr Blair for about 25 minutes,

with Jonathan Dimbleby chairing.

Mr Ashdown would then be questioned on his own, before another 30 minutes when Mr Blair and Mr Major would be cross-questioned by Sue Lawley and Michael Brunson.

A senior Tory source said that both proposals were being seriously considered but that they were concerned about the "rigidity" of the BBC proposals. "The Prime Minister does not like the stopwatch approach, or nine minutes for each question, which will give Tony Blair the opportunity to trot out his soundbites, with no proper time for debate."

Both proposals include an audience but neither would be allowed to participate. The source said that Mr Major would like two debates and it was possible that one could be on BBC and the other on ITV.

The televised debate between the three main party leaders should be produced jointly by the BBC, ITV and the satellite station Sky News, and screened simultaneously on all three channels, a senior Sky executive said yesterday (Alexander Frean writes).

Nick Pollard, head of Sky News, has invited Tony Hall, chief executive of BBC News, and Marion Bowman, deputy controller of factual programmes at ITV, to discuss the proposal. He said that the party leaders were far more likely to agree to a debate if only one format was proposed and if they were not required to chose between rival bids.

"Our view is that the debate should be done in the American way, with one output made available to all broadcasters." He said one possible format would be to have a panel of interviewers, one from each of the three broadcasters, and an independent chairman.

The Prime Minister urged MPs to focus on the differences between the Tories and Labour, concentrating on the proposed windfall tax, the social chapter and Labour's opposition to expanding selection in schools. He touched briefly on Europe, on which the Tories have in effect agreed an election truce.

Election 97, pages 11, 12 and 13

Stirring speech lifts backbench spirits

By JILL SHERMAN

JOHN MAJOR told Tory

MPs yesterday that more than a third of voters had not decided who to back in the election, and it was "our job to bring those voters back home".

MPs said that Mr Major's comment about the proportion of undecided voters had in particular raised morale. Although several conceded that the Tories are a substantial way behind Labour in the opinion polls, one said: "The Prime Minister is genuinely confident. Even if others don't have the same optimism, they feel much better tonight."

The Prime Minister urged MPs to focus on the differences between the Tories and Labour, concentrating on the proposed windfall tax, the social chapter and Labour's opposition to expanding selection in schools. He touched briefly on Europe, on which the Tories have in effect agreed an election truce.

Tory MPs said afterwards that Mr Major's speech had

been crucial in raising morale after the heavy defeat by Labour in the Wirral South by-election last month. "That was the low-point of the last year, and our spirits have crept a little higher tonight."

MPs said that Mr Major's comment about the proportion of undecided voters had in particular raised morale. Although several conceded that the Tories are a substantial way behind Labour in the opinion polls, one said: "The Prime Minister is genuinely confident. Even if others don't have the same optimism, they feel much better tonight."

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Tory MPs said afterwards that Mr Major's speech had



Neil Hamilton in London yesterday

Al Fayed payment

Continued from page 1

don that the true number of fees was at least six. The payments totalled almost £30,000.

Sir Michael, who is standing down at the election, said: "It is true I gave the wrong information to the select committee. But I based the evidence on incorrect information I had received."

The discrepancy over payments to Sir Michael was one of the reasons for the collapse of the libel case brought by Mr Greer and the former Trade Minister Neil Hamilton against *The Guardian*.

But it is the leak of Mr Smith's evidence that will most embarrass the Conservatives.

He won plaudits from colleagues when he resigned on the day the cash-for-questions allegations were published in October 1994.

John Major, who had been told about the allegations three weeks earlier, praised him for his "clear and full explanation".

Mr Smith received his payments between 1986 and 1989, when he asked 17 questions for Mr Al-Fayed in the Commons. He argued that he had raised "legitimate concerns".

and this should not be taken in any

way as an actual decision. It is far too soon for that. It will obviously depend on how he feels in the future."

The Archbishop is likely to make a final decision nearer to his 65th birthday, after consulting friends and colleagues throughout the Anglican Communion. There is little doubt that Dr Carey, considered an episodic version of a workaholic by those close to him, would stay on if he felt called to do so, no matter how exhausted he had become.

Dr Carey, filmed by Meridian

Broadcasting during a visit to South Africa to mark the retirement of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, also discloses a passion for football, and reveals his sadness that his ministry does not always receive the support in Britain that it does on his frequent trips overseas.

"I do not think any point of my ministry has ever been wholeheartedly 100 per cent backed," he says. "But with God all things are possible and I have seen over the last five years wonderful things happening, signs of life, signs of growth."

Selfless sacrifice

Doctor j
groping
hospita

Firefighters
made to pay
for sexual
bullying

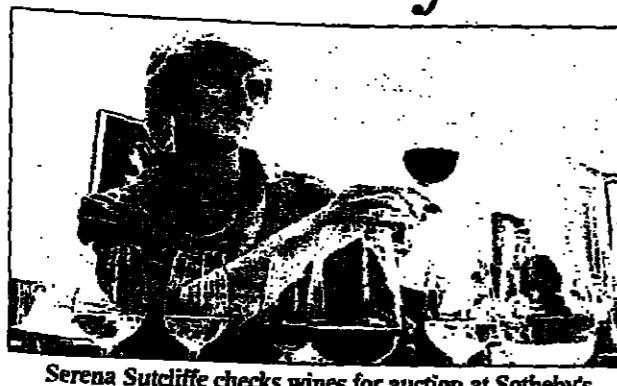
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Wine buyers check wallets as Bordeaux predicts vintage year



Serena Sutcliffe checks wines for auction at Sotheby's

By ROBIN YOUNG

A LARGE contingent of the British wine trade will descend on Bordeaux next week, wondering whether United Kingdom customers can afford to buy any 1996 first clarets.

The French, hopeful that prices already at record levels may rise yet higher, have postponed the annual release of their most valuable wines. Though they will be available for tasting in Bordeaux from next week, the prices may not be declared for at least another two or three weeks.

The word in the trade is that 1996 is an even better year for claret than

1995, a vintage whose best wines doubled in value within months of being released onto the market at this time last year.

The 1996 wines, few of which even wine merchants have yet been able to taste, will not be ready to leave cellars in Bordeaux for another two years, seem to have been saved from the effects of a relatively cold, wet summer by a warm, dry September.

Respected château owners are optimistic. Anthony Barton, owner of Château Léoville-Barton, and Lang-Barton, has said that 1996 could prove the best vintage of the decade. Other authorities have suggested that for some châteaux 1996 may even prove the best year since the classic 1982.

Prices for good vintage claret shot up by an average of 60 per cent last year, and the continuing excitement in the market was evidenced at an auction at Sotheby's in London yesterday, with prices continuing an upward trend which is putting more and more wines beyond ordinary drinkers' reach. Clarets of popular châteaux that were still under £30 a bottle retail a few years ago now cost over £50 even before they are bottled and shipped.

Serena Sutcliffe, the Master of

Wine who is head of Sotheby's International Wine Department, said after a sale in which 98 per cent by value of the wines successfully sold:

"This was an outstanding result. Top wines from the exceptional vintages of the 1980s are simply racing out of the saleroom."

Stephen Mould, the auctioneer who took the sale, said afterwards: "There is very strong demand from the Far East, but some of the highest priced lots still went to UK buyers. Prices for good vintage claret generally continued upwards, so that first class growths of the 1982 vintage which were £3,600 a case at the end

of last year, were fetching £4,200 at this sale."

Freddy Price, a London merchant whose trade tasting earlier this week included some of the first cask samples of 1996 claret seen in London, said yesterday: "The quality seemed very high indeed, but until I have tasted more wines it is too early to judge the overall quality of the vintage. I am going to Bordeaux on Friday and I expect about half the British wine trade to be there. This is certainly going to be a year for en primeur sales, when customers buy wines as soon as they are released, even before they are bottled."

Doctor jailed for groping nurse in hospital store

By EMMA WILKINS

A DOCTOR has been jailed for three months and faces being struck off the Medical Register after putting his hand up a nurse's skirt.

Philip Sugarman, 32, who said he often engaged in sexual banter with colleagues to relieve stress, indecently assaulted the woman as she leaned over a trolley at the Royal Oldham Hospital.

The 34-year-old nurse, who cannot be named, was in tears for much of the three-day hearing at Manchester Crown Court and left yesterday supported by her friends and relatives.

The court was told that Sugarman, a registrar, accepted that his banter was politically incorrect, but believed that it helped to relieve tension in the busy casualty unit.

A jury of nine men and three women convicted Sugarman, of West Didsbury, Manchester, by an 11 to one majority after deliberating for three hours and ten minutes.

The court was told that he followed his victim into a storeroom, put his hand up her skirt and said: "I want to see if you wear knickers for work." He backed off when she shouted and swore at him.

The woman later complained to police and Sugarman was arrested. The doctor did not deny the incident but claimed that sexual banter with the woman had led him to believe she would



Sugarman: lawyer said career could be ruined

consent. The nurse denied that she had engaged in sexual banter with him.

The assault came a few weeks after Sugarman had joined the hospital. He was engaged to be married to a nurse at the time.

Clement Goldstone, QC, told the court in mitigation that his client's career could be ruined: "This is a case that will have serious, if not tragic, consequences for the defendant in the context of his career. I cannot seek to criticise the Crown Prosecution Service for having brought this case before the criminal courts, but it is difficult to refrain from expressing the view that this man could have remained an internal disciplinary matter."

Judge Hammond disagreed, saying that trust was

vital between colleagues. "I don't think it was a matter that could be overlooked: people have to work with each other and they have to trust each other."

Mr Goldstone said that Sugarman was ashamed of himself and realised that it had been an unpleasant experience for his victim. The nurse, who has a child, was off work for two months after the incident in February last year and had received counselling.

The judge, who said the offence fell towards the lower end of the scale, emphasised that female hospital staff were entitled not to be abused while at work. He told Sugarman: "Your behaviour was intolerable and unforgivable. Women who work in hospitals have to be certain that they are not going to be grabbed from behind and have a hand pushed up their skirt."

After the hearing, Sugarman's lawyers said that his family had been shocked by the sentence and that there would be an appeal. Sugarman has still to face an internal inquiry.

The Professional Conduct Committee of the General Medical Council examines the cases of all practitioners who receive jail sentences. The committee has the power to strike doctors off the Medical Register or to recommend that they face restrictions on practising.



New bunch: the once prevalent floral image is relegated to a few stylised blooms

Laura Ashley puts Bo Peep out to pasture

By GRACE BRADBERRY, STYLE EDITOR

LAURA ASHLEY is reinventing its image, exchanging the twee sprigs that made it famous for outsized roses, or dropping the floral theme completely. An advertising campaign launched in America carries the slogan: "Laura Ashley — say it without flowers."

The second line reinforces the change of image: "If you thought you knew Laura Ashley, think again." The campaign, devised by Ann Iverson, its American chief executive, marks the end of an era. Tens of thousands of women have a sprig-patterned skirt, smocked pin-up or 1980s taffeta ballgown lurking in their wardrobes.

Ms Iverson, who moved to Laura Ashley from Mothercare in 1995, inherited a company that was struggling to reinvent itself. Research showed that potential customers regarded the label as frumpy, outdated and expensive and it suffered heavy losses in the early 1990s.

In January, Ms Iverson appointed a new head of design, Basha Cohen, with a brief to produce modern classics. The spring and summer collection is the first produced by Ms Cohen and jettisons the leg-of-mutton sleeves and lace collars.

The Laura Ashley collection does include some flowers, but they are stylised white silhouettes on a black dress or huge roses. A company spokeswoman said: "There are many different ways to

use flowers — it doesn't have to be early Eighties."

The policy is a tightrope: most women still connect Laura Ashley with its Arcadian image. So influential was the 1975 "milkmaid" dress that it is included alongside Vivienne Westwood and Mary Quant designs in the Cutting Edge exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

In the Eighties, Laura Ashley was the label that many teenage girls craved. Kate Reardon, fashion editor of *Tatler*, said: "At 15, my biggest dream was to have a strapless Laura Ashley evening dress to wear to the Hurlingham Club disco."

"But the fact that they're providing sleek clothes that women can wear to the office without looking like Little Bo Peep is to be applauded."



Back pettling: the old milkmaid look

Firefighters made to pay for sexual bullying

By A STAFF REPORTER

SIX firemen have been punished for sexually harassing a woman colleague days after their brigade had to pay a record £200,000 compensation to her colleague for sexual harassment.

The Hereford and Worcester force said yesterday that it had eradicated sexual bullying after one fireman was forced to resign and five others fined for "gross and foul" behaviour to Becky Walker.

Earlier this week Tania Clayton, 31, was awarded £200,000 after suffering three years of intimidation, insults and cruelty.

An internal investigation by the force has disciplined six firefighters after what a Fire Brigade Union spokesman said was "gross and foul acts of sexual harassment, including physical acts" against Miss Walker, who was off work suffering from stress.

Hereford and Worcester County Council said its fire service had eradicated such behaviour. "We now have a new administration and new fire officer and it is a measure of the confidence in them that Miss Walker felt able to complain about her colleagues' behaviour."

Woman wins first judgment against stage hypnotist

By ADAM FRESCO

A WOMAN has won the first judgment against a stage hypnotist in a claim for psychological damage during his show.

Lynn Howarth, 36, a trainee midwife, says that she became a different person after taking part in a stage act that she had booked for a social evening. She tried to commit suicide twice and shouted abuse at her children.

Mrs Howarth is claiming thousands of pounds against the hypnotist for loss of earnings for both her and her husband, who had to give up work to look after her and their seven children. At Blackburn County Court a judgment was entered in default because the hypnotist failed to file a defence.

Mrs Howarth was hypnotised for two hours during the show at a social club near her home in Lancashire. She was made to dance like Madonna and shivered when made to believe she was freezing cold.

During the act in February 1994 she was told she would wake up when she touched the hand of the hypnotist and would feel a 10,000 volt electric shock. She said yesterday: "Inside my head I was beginning to be allowed to go back

to my table. But he had me totally under his control and I couldn't make a sound that he didn't order me to make. The humiliation was awful. I wandered back to out table like a zombie." Although her husband complained, he was told by the hypnotist that his wife was just tired. But by the time she got home she was shivering with cold and had a headache. She remained feeling ill for four days before her doctor told her that she was suffering a form of trauma. She remained ill for six months.

During that time she became depressed and was prescribed Prozac. She started shouting at the children and screaming abuse at them. Brian had to come home from work and do all the cooking and housework. I couldn't bear to cuddle the children let alone let Brian touch me. It is a miracle our marriage survived."

Seven months after being hypnotised she tried to commit suicide by driving her car at high speed towards a tree. At the last minute she thought of her family and swerved away. A few weeks later she did the same thing.

Ms Beguinua, from Bayswater, London, denies using a copy of a false instrument. The case continues.

'Baroness' accused of £16 trillion fraud

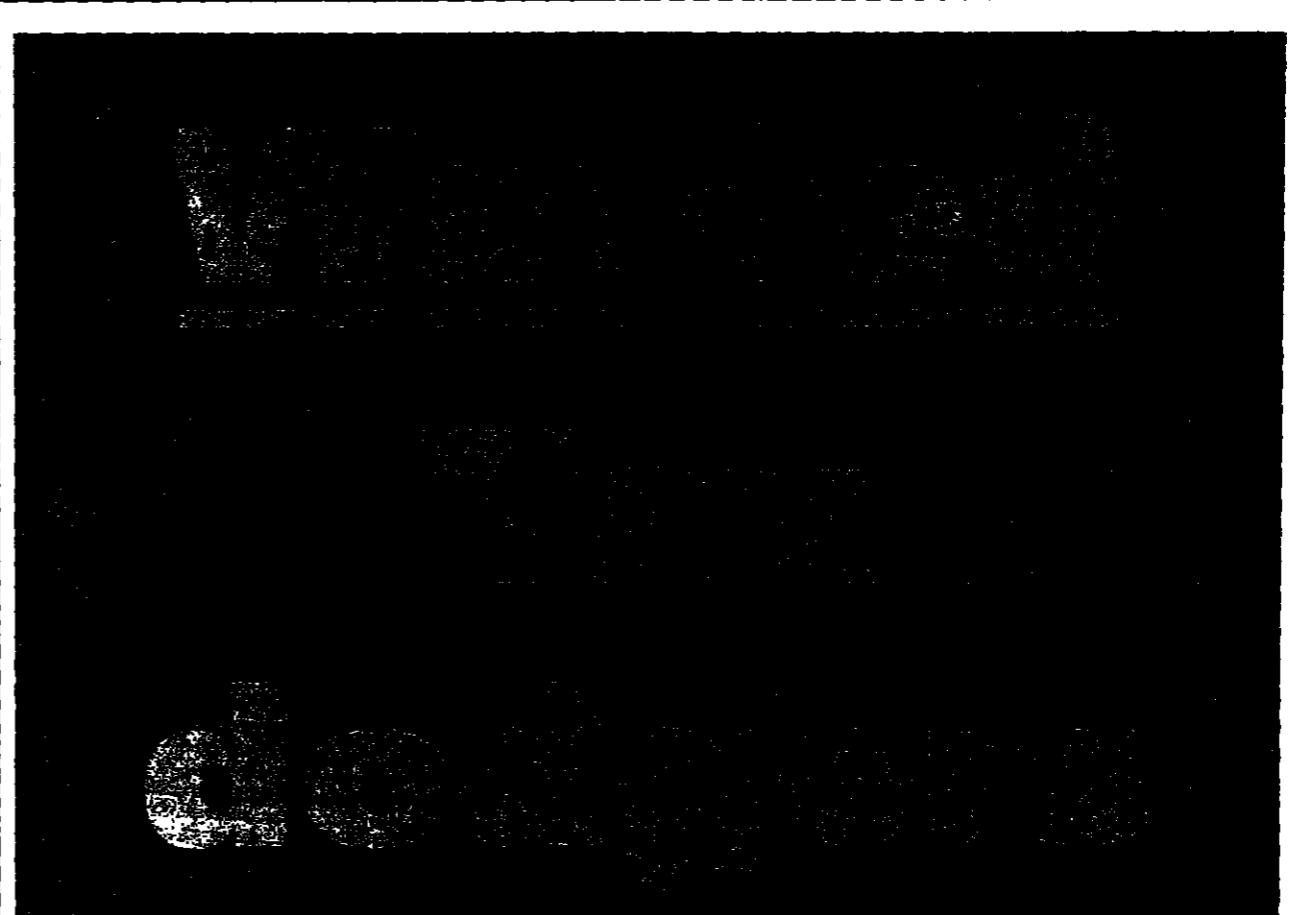
By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

A WOMAN who allegedly posed as a baroness in an attempt to pull off a £16 trillion (£16 million million) fraud was found out when she claimed to possess unrealistic quantities of precious metals.

Financial staff grew suspicious when she claimed to have access to more precious metals than had been produced in the world over the past 150 years. Southwark Crown Court was told yesterday. The jury was told that Eida Beguinua, 52, who styled herself Baroness Avilla, attempted to secure £16 trillion in credit using false certificates that purported to give her access to precious metals worth £600 billion.

When she approached John Fox, a broker, he realised the story was fictitious, the court was told. Martin Hicks, for the prosecution, said Ms Beguinua told Mr Fox that since 1930 certificates had been deposited in the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. Mr Fox knew bullion deposits held there but had been moved.

Ms Beguinua, from Bayswater, London, denies using a copy of a false instrument. The case continues.



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Selfless sacrifice puts sheep in clover

By A STAFF REPORTER

A FLOCK of sheep in the New Forest has developed a cunning streak not normally associated with the species. The animals appear to have formed an ovine commando unit to breach cattle grids designed to keep them away from villagers' gardens.

One animal selflessly lies across the grid as its companions line up to step across it to where they can see the grass is greener. The carefully co-ordinated behaviour, which leaves the first sheep marooned on the wrong side of the grid, has impressed villagers in Brantham, Hampshire. Sue Wyan, a parish

councillor, said: "I couldn't believe my eyes the first time I saw it. Once the sheep saw the grass on the other side of my cattle grid they obviously decided nothing was going to stop them getting in."

"They must have seen that the grass was greener in my garden and that — come what may — they were determined to get there. While one of them lies over the grid, the others jump on its back and cross to the other side."

Fellow villagers Len and Ann King said the enterprising manoeuvre was one of many methods sheep had used to enter private gardens.



Sheep in the New Forest eyeing up the challenge

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Hi-tech treatment can stop the heart

By NIGEL HAWKES

SCIENCE EDITOR

AGGRESSIVE treatment of mild heart attacks does more harm than good, an American study has shown. The death rate is higher among patients who are examined by having tubes introduced into their hearts, a procedure that is common in America but less so in Europe.

The findings surprised the researchers because American cardiologists have been convinced that rapid, all-out treatment is the best option, even for victims of relatively mild heart attacks.

"We were just astonished to find that people who got the more aggressive therapy had a significantly higher death rate," William Boden, who directed the study at the Veterans' Affairs Upstate Health Care System in Syracuse, New York, said.

In the aggressive approach tested in the study, doctors send all patients for catheterisations, in which a small tube is introduced into the heart and dye is released so that the blood flow can be seen.

If narrowing is found, such patients are treated with balloon angioplasty — in which a balloon is inflated inside the artery to widen it — or by surgery in which the blocked arteries are bypassed. The alternative is to monitor patients closely with non-invasive tests such as an electrocardiogram, and give drugs that break up blood clots.



Bogle: said urgent cases would still have access

ments are going to get even more clogged up."

The Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association was "gravely concerned" that the campaign would deter the old and the vulnerable from seeking medical help.

The BMA said that urgent cases would always receive attention, but that other patients should try to avoid calling out the GP unnecessarily.

Out-of-hours calls have in-

Family sues over CJD

By MICHAEL HORNSBY

THE brother of a student who died from a brain condition linked to "mad cow" disease has been granted legal aid to sue the Government for alleged negligence in failing to protect the public.

Peter Hall, from Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, died last year aged 20 from a new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease which scientists think was probably caused by eating beef infected with BSE.

creased fivefold over the past 20 years as patients have increasingly used the service for routine demands. Doctors have reported receiving calls from patients who needed an aspirin for a headache.

Ian Bogle, chairman of the BMA's GPs committee, said the campaign was necessary to avoid the "bedlam" that occurred in GP surgeries in the week before and after the longest public holiday of the year. He said patients taking regular medicines should ensure they had adequate supplies and that, for most illnesses, a day or two's wait before seeing the doctor would do no harm. But he emphasised that urgent cases would be seen or given advice over the telephone, as appropriate.

"They will always have access to GPs," he said.

The £2,500 campaign is the first of the Doctor-Patient Partnership initiated by the BMA and the Health Department last year as part of a deal to end the profession's dispute over out-of-hours payments.

About 50 health authorities who have contributed to the scheme will receive posters and leaflets for distribution to patients and doctors, advising them how to prepare for Easter.

Dr Bogle rejected criticism from the Patients Association that the campaign was a misuse of NHS resources designed to benefit doctors, not patients. "Certainly it is about making GPs' lives less hectic, but it is not to allow lazy doctors to put their feet up. I refute that entirely."

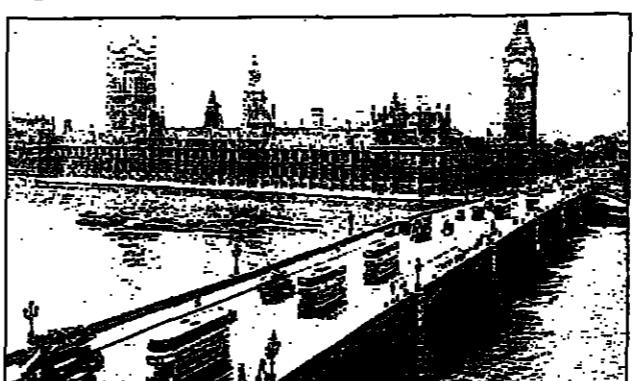
Mr Dorrell said the public needed to be reminded of how best to use the out-of-hours service.



The 1940 guidebooks include snapshots of the South Coast and, below, the Houses of Parliament

Nazis' rough guide to invading Britain

GERMAN intelligence maps disguised as tourist guidebooks are among wartime souvenirs to be sold by a former Royal Engineer. The 20 mapbooks were prepared for Operation Sea Lion, the German invasion which was halted by the Battle of Britain.



The books, dated September 1940, show the South Coast and parts of East Anglia. The Germans had aerial photographs of possible invasion beaches from Dover to the West Country. One book contains a concertina-folded map about 40ft long. There is also a guide to England and a glossary of English, Gaelic and Welsh, plus pamphlets for the invasion of Russia in 1941. They have been put up

there. We were instructed to pack up the interesting stuff and send it home and to destroy the rest. As I was a map man, I decided to keep a set as a souvenir."

When he joined the Army he worked on maps for the defence of Southampton and later found copies of them in a German depot in France.

Mr Grehan said: "Towards the end of the war the authorities asked people in this country to send in holiday snaps of the French coast to help to plan the invasion of Europe. The books show how the Germans were doing it well before 1940." The collection is expected to make about £600 at G.A. Key in Aylesham, Norfolk, tomorrow.

Transsexuals win European backing in battle for legal recognition

By FRANCES GIBB

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights.

Yesterday they won the backing of the European Commission of Human Rights, which has passed their cases to the European Court of Human Rights for a final ruling. A victory there next year would force legal changes to allow transsexuals to have their birth certificates altered. The Government is opposed to such a change, because

it says the certificate is a record of events at birth and is not affected by what happens later.

Ms Sheffield, now 51 and living in London, has been provided with a passport and driving licence in her new name since changing sex in 1986, but is still regarded as a man under British law. That means she was required to divorce before the sex-change surgery and cannot marry a man. Her ex-wife's

application to a court to terminate Ms Sheffield's access to her daughter was approved, on the ground that contact with a transsexual would not be in the child's interests. As a result, she has not seen her daughter for eight years.

Ms Horsham, also 51, who has been living in Amsterdam since 1983, claims she is forced to live in exile because she wants to marry her male partner. They plan to

marry in Holland, where the law recognises transsexuals. She has been issued with a birth certificate showing her new sex by the Register of Births in The Hague, but a request to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys in Britain to amend her original birth certificate was rejected.

Both women complained to the Commission on Human Rights, which acts as a first filter of cases

before referring them to the European Court of Human Rights, that the determination of gender under British law on the basis of "biological indicators" existing at birth was unjustified socially, medically and scientifically.

They argued that the fact that legal purposes — such as obtaining insurance and contractual documents — require them to disclose their previous gender amounted to

Law Report, page 42

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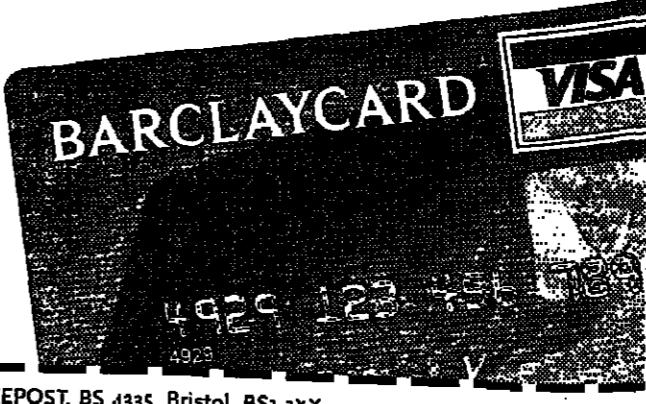
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1,800 students chase 120 places on new Bar school course

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

INTENSE competition to enter the Bar was revealed yesterday by figures showing that 1,800 students have applied for 120 places on the new Bar vocational course being run by the College of Law in September.

It is the first time that institutions other than the Inns of Court School of Law have been allowed to offer the one-year vocational course which barristers have to pass before they can seek a fellowship in chambers, or pupillage. The first offers will be sent out this week through the Bar Council. The College of Law is the biggest organisation for training solicitors in Europe with branches in London, Guildford, York and Chester. The course has been devised with the help of an advisory board chaired by a High Court judge, Mr Justice Lightman, and including Cherie Booth, QC.

The figures coincide with the first analysis of the offers made in recent months by chambers to the students who have completed the Bar vocational course. The offers have been made through the Bar's first clearing-house scheme, which has attracted criticism from students who said that all first-round offers went to 25 per cent of students. A breakdown of the figures shows that it is far harder for ethnic minority candidates of both sexes to obtain an offer than for white candidates. It is also easier for younger candidates to obtain offers.

Some 855 white males applied for pupillages, which was 49.5 per cent of the total of 1,727 applicants, and 499 of them received offers (52.3 per cent of the total). White females did better: 523 applied (50.3 per cent) and 340 (35.6 per cent) obtained offers. Of the ethnic minority students, 176 males and 173 females (10.2 per cent and 10 per cent applied for pupillages and 58 and 57 respectively (about 6

per cent) received offers. The older the applicants, the worse they fared. The 44 per cent of applicants under 25 commanded more than 65 per cent of the offers, while the 17 per cent in the age range 31 to 40 commanded just over 9 per cent, and the 5 per cent who were aged between 41 and 50 commanded only 1.3 per cent.

Robert Owen, QC, chairman of the Bar, said the disproportionate number of younger students taken on was because of "the demands of the market", rather than a consequence of the system. He said the Bar would be studying the figures to see if any action could be taken.

Yesterday the scheme was dealt a fresh blow when one of the most prestigious sets of chambers, 2 Hare Court, pulled out because it felt students had no certainty of gaining a pupillage despite paying for a vocational course.

Law Report, page 42

£80,000 for solicitor in newspaper libel case

By A STAFF REPORTER

A SOLICITOR at the heart of a High Court libel action over brainwashing allegations settled his claim against *The Daily Telegraph* for £80,000 yesterday.

Stephen Kirby accepted the sum as damages, plus his legal costs and a public apology, before a jury, which on Tuesday found in his favour, went on to assess an award.

Mr Kirby had sued the newspaper with Richard Wilmet-Smith, QC, and his wife, Jenny, a psychic healer, over an article in 1995 headlined "Dark side of the New Age". They said the report made it appear that Mr Kirby had been brainwashed into leaving his family.

Mr Kirby, 41, from Islington, north London, separated from his wife, Clare, ten months after he first consulted Mrs Wilmet-Smith about headaches. He and his wife had two children.

The newspaper and Mrs Kirby, who was sued by the Wilmet-Smiths alone, denied libel and pleaded justification. On Tuesday the jury awarded Mr Wilmet-Smith £250,000 and his wife £100,000. The newspaper also has to pay an estimated costs bill of more than £500,000.

Indonesia arms deals challenged in court

By A STAFF REPORTER

THE first legal challenge to the Government's defence export policy was launched in the High Court yesterday.

An alliance of pressure groups is seeking to have the Government's approval of arms sales to Indonesia declared unlawful and has applied for a judicial review. A judge will now decide whether there is "an arguable case".

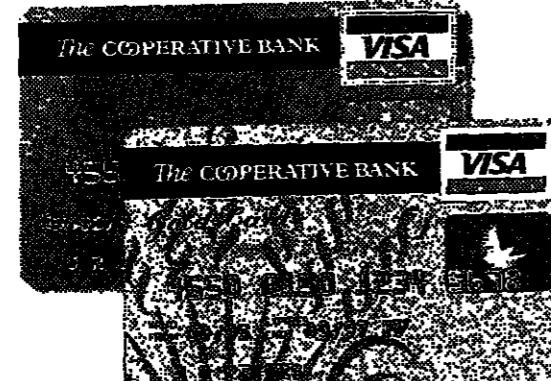
The challenge is being led by the World Development Movement with the support of the Campaign Against the Arms Trade and the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign.

The groups claim that British-made arms have been used against peaceful demonstrators. Harriet Lamb, a spokeswoman for the campaign, said: "All the evidence shows that Indonesia is guilty of recent serious human rights abuses and British equipment has been misused in perpetuating these abuses. The evidence also shows the Government knew this, and yet they granted licences for more equipment."

The Department of Trade and Industry said that the licences were issued "in the light of established and internationally agreed criteria for military exports".

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Close copy: Christina Hance as the Princess

Being Princess's double was not a job to dye for

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A WOMAN who has made a lucrative career out of looking like Diana, Princess of Wales, has decided to retire after ten years because of the strain of living in the public eye.

Christina Hance, 36, who earned up to £5,000 a day as an impersonator, said yesterday that she could no longer cope with the constant attention and had found herself suffering the same domestic and health problems as her royal alter ego.

Ms Hance, from St Neots, Cambridgeshire, is packing away her tiara and plans to dye her blonde highlights black to ensure she is no longer mistaken for the Princess. "Being Diana sent me mad and made me very ill.

The first five years were total excitement, but I ended up like a zombie," she said yesterday. "It means I can't go anywhere without attracting attention. The lack of privacy has been difficult to deal with."

Ms Hance was working as a secretary when her boyfriend sent her photograph in a television competition ten years ago. She was immediately offered a steady stream



The Princess: alter ego suffered same problems

of work and, over the years, she has learnt to imitate the Princess's mannerisms through studying newspaper clippings and television footage.

However, she said, her health suffered with the Princess's. "The strain of public life has been too much for both of us. As Diana suffered so did I - our lives followed the same pattern. I developed irritable bowel syndrome from not eating properly, took anti-depressants to cope with violent mood swings."

"My weight was going up and down and I found it difficult to sleep. I felt my

health and mind slowly going."

Her marriage ended in divorce and her last relationship ended when her boyfriend was unable to cope with her double lifestyle. During many jobs, she said, she was treated as if she were the Princess. "A lot of jobs were set up as if I were the real Diana. I travelled in limousines and private jets and was given a bodyguard."

"I lived the life of a princess for a day and then went home to do the washing up. It was very hard to adjust to that. The lack of privacy has been difficult to deal with because people don't just look at me, they stare."

Last year Ms Hance was one of two lookalikes to appear in a videotape apparently showing the Princess cavorting at Highgrove with Major James Hewitt. Ms Hance believed that she was making a sketch for a new satirical television show, but stills were later used to fool *The Sun*, which published them as genuine.

Ms Hance is setting up a business distributing aloe vera gel. "I won't miss the business. There was no real job satisfaction," she said.



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More than one third of women abstain from sex

By DOMINIC KENNEDY
SOCIAL AFFAIRS
CORRESPONDENT

THE British are much less sexually active than suggested by glossy magazines, the advertising industry and television dramas. While the new series of BBC2's *This Life* depicts a group of young solicitors bed-hopping, the reality is far less exciting, according to the latest General Household Survey.

Thirty-nine per cent of unmarried females are chaste, along with 34 per cent of widowed, divorced and separated women, according to the most comprehensive government survey of lifestyles. By contrast, 99 per cent of married or cohabiting women have an active sex life. The figures were obtained by questioning 5,067 women aged 16 to 49 about their use of contraceptives.

Researchers discovered that 28 per cent of women did not practise contraception. Half of



This Life's Egg and Milly. Real life is less sensual

those did not have a sexual relationship. Despite the exciting image of teenage life portrayed by youth magazines, young people have the least sex of any age group.

Teenagers are far less likely to be sexually active than their middle-aged mothers. Among 16 and 17-year-old girls, 64 per cent had no sexual relation-

ship. At 18 and 19, the figure fell to 37 per cent and among 20 to 24-year-olds it was 20 per cent.

Between the ages of 25 and 49 sexual activity reaches its peak, with 90 per cent or more of women having sex. The types of women who are likely to have no sex are on the increase. The proportion of

single women has risen by half since 1979, reaching 28 per cent. Divorcees have doubled from 4 per cent to 9 per cent.

The use of condoms is still increasing as health educators promote them as protection against AIDS. Among 18 and 19-year-olds, 26 per cent use a condom, compared with 6 per cent in 1986.

There has, however, been a fall in the proportion of 16 and 17-year-olds practising safer sex, from 17 per cent in 1993 to 13 per cent. This may be because the predicted AIDS plague, which experts used in the 1980s to frighten sexually active people into changing their habits, did not happen.

The Pill is the favourite method of contraception, used by 25 per cent of women, and most popular among those in their 20s and single. Sterilisation is used by 24 per cent of couples, mostly married. Emergency contraception, usually the "morning-after" Pill, is used by 7 per cent of women and is favoured by under-30s.

How they made a meal of manners in 1791

BY JOHN VINCENT

DINNER party hosts agonising over where to seat guests might spare a thought for their high-society counterparts of the 18th century.

Giving a successful banquet required a keen awareness of precedence and attention to the minutiae of table manners, carving, servants' behaviour, small-talk and dress.

A rare example of a 1791 guide to ease the way into genteel society of the aspiring host or hostess has emerged from a private library coming onto the auction market.

The Honours of the Table, or Rules for behaviour during meals with the whole art of carving ... for the use of young people, by John Trusler, is expected to fetch up to £500 at Christie's tomorrow.

Rupert Needham of Christie's, said yesterday: "The rules in those days were very complicated. For instance, the host and hostess had to go on eating as long as the last guest was eating. They had to plough on or it was considered impolite."

Trusler writes: "When dinner is announced, the mistress of the house requests the lady first in rank to shew the way to the rest, and walk first into the room. She then asks the second in precedence to follow, and after all the ladies are passed, she brings up the rear herself. The master of the



Entertaining in the 18th century required keen attention to the minutiae

house does the same with the gentlemen."

Seating is simple. "The mistress of the table sits at the upper-end, those of superior rank next her, right and left, those next in rank following, then the gentlemen, and the master at the lower end."

Eating and drinking required care and Trusler's advice could still apply in some quarters today. "Eating

a great deal is indelicate to a lady (for her character should be rather divine than sensual) so it will be ill-mannered to help her to a large slice of meat at once, or fill her plate too full. As it is unseemly for ladies to call for wine, the gentlemen present should ask them in turn whether it is agreeable to drink a glass."

Trusler concludes with some "valuable hints" for hosts. "Shew in every thing a modesty. Be not always speaking of yourself, be not boastful, be not forward, boast not, angle not for praise."

Aspiring party-givers are advised "on all occasions to keep up good breeding, to be remarkable for cleanliness of person, to attend to your address and phraseology and small-talk". He concludes: "Use fashionable language."

Scots and poor have more false teeth

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

THE poorest people are far more likely to lose their teeth than the affluent. By the age of 74, 59 per cent of people who had been unskilled manual workers were toothless, compared with 18 per cent among the professional classes.

There is also a striking geographical inequality in dental health. Nearly one in four of all Scots have no teeth, and more than a fifth of people in Yorkshire. However, around Greater London and

the South East, only 10 per cent of the population are toothless.

The reasons for the geographical variations are uncertain: Scots are more likely to go for a regular dental check than the English. The social reasons for tooth loss are more obvious: professional people are most likely to have checks and manual workers the least.

Good habits are passed down among families. The main factor deciding whether a child will go to the dentist regularly is whether the child's mother does so now.

Dental hygiene is improving overall, with only 15 per cent of all Britons being toothless, compared with 26 per cent in 1983. The proportion of people who have bought private medical insurance has doubled to 6 per cent since 1983.

The General Household Survey also discloses an increase in the number of men who have a hearing difficulty, but do not wear a hearing aid. In 1979, 82 per cent of men aged 65 to 64 had no hearing problems, compared with 77 per cent now.

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Health plan fails to curb smoking

BY JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

A GROUP of MPs criticised the Department of Health yesterday for its failure to curb the rise in teenage smoking. The Commons Public Accounts Committee said it was "dismayed" by the increase, from 8 per cent to 12 per cent of 11 to 15-year-olds in the two years to 1994. The target was a reduction to 6 per cent under the Health of the Nation strategy.

Labour seized on the report, challenging Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, to ban tobacco advertising and calling on Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, to decrease the amount of money the Conservatives receive from the tobacco industry.

The committee, which examined progress towards the 27 targets set under the Health of the Nation strategy launched in 1992, said the rise in teenage smoking would have knock-on effects on can-

cer and heart disease. "We look to the department, together with the Department of the Environment and the Department of Education and Employment, to explore what further action can be taken to reverse this trend," it said.

The committee, echoing the report by the National Audit Office last year, said there had been good progress towards 11 of the 27 targets, especially on heart disease, stroke and some cancers. However, key targets on obesity and women's drinking were being missed.

The committee said it was "disturbed" by a rise in adult obesity of more than a third. By 1994, 16 per cent of women were rated obese, as were 13 per cent of men. It was also concerned about the rise in the number of women drinking more than 14 units of alcohol a week, to 13 per cent by 1994 compared with a target reduction to 7 per cent by 2005.

Children defy TV's watershed

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN

NEARLY half of British children aged five and six claim that at weekends they watch television later than the 9pm watershed, after which material meant for adults is broadcast, according to research published today.

The survey, conducted by the Norwich-based market research company SMRC Childwise, shows that more than a fifth of five and six-year-olds claim that they even watch television after 9pm during the week. Rosemary Duff, one of the study's authors, said that parents were increasingly unable or unwilling to prevent their children watching after the watershed.

As more than half of children aged five to fourteen have a television in their bedroom and nearly a fifth have their own video recorder, it is becoming increasingly difficult for parents to control their children's viewing.

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Labour wants a more democratic second chamber — but critics foresee an ermine-clad quango

Reform of Lords spells end of great political dynasties

THE Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee once said that if he ever ended up as a peer he would take the title Lord Luveduck. He did indeed take an earldom when he retired, but to the disappointment of all, chose against the name.

His grandson Earl Attlee, who has just joined the Conservatives from the cross-benches, would be among some of the most distinguished political dynasties of the past 700 years to lose their voting rights in the House of Lords if Labour and Liberal Democrat proposals for electoral reform go ahead.

Under the plans, hereditary peers would lose their right to sit, speak and vote in the Lords. 'Club rights', allowing them to use the bars and restaurants, might be offered as a sweetener to soften the blow.

Viscount Cranborne, John



Attlee took an earldom after leaving Commons

Major's chief of staff during the election, who is part of the Cecil family, would be a high-profile casualty, along with the Liberal Democrat Earl Russell, son of Bertrand Russell, and the Earl of Carnarvon, a crossbencher, who is racing manager to the Queen.

It was Lord Carnarvon's grandfather, the 5th Earl, whose passion for Egyptology led to the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922. The current Earl shares his grandfather's other great interests: horses and racing, and is only an occasional attender in the Lords.

By contrast, the 5th Earl Russell is one of the most active hereditary peers and a supporter of reform. He is a highly effective spokesman on social security. In 1834 his great-grandfather, John Russell, was among the Whigs who pushed the Great Reform Act through Parliament and went on to become Prime Minister. Among other family

achievements, his two grandsons, of whom Bertrand was one, accumulated a total of seven wives.

The present Earl is convinced that another period of reform is essential, and one which would end his family's long connections with the Lords. It is proportional representation and the need to control the executive, as much as the removal of the hereditary principle, that underlies his support for reform. 'Westminster is a sandcastle with the tide lapping round it and the House of Commons is becoming more and more isolated,' he said.

The Government, he believes, is the most centralised and least controlled of any in the Western world. The importance of a reformed Lords must rest on the checks it imposes on the executive, where the Opposition in the Commons has failed.

Robin Cook, chairman of Labour's policy forum, has suggested that the replacement of hereditary peers by newly created life peers would, over the course of a Parliament, ensure that the balance in the Lords reflected the proportion of votes cast for each party in an election.

But replacing the hereditary principle by one which offered more patronage to the Prime Minister and party leaders — an ermine-clad quango — is the worse solution for Lord Cranborne, the Leader of the House of Lords.

Reform, to which he is not opposed, should produce a second chamber which was independent, not in elective competition with the Commons and not susceptible to corruption. The current proposals are, he believes, muddled, and a Lords filled with life peers on a proportional basis, could be used by a government as 'a poodle', to quote Lloyd George in an earlier constitutional battle.

Also facing exclusion would be the Countess of Mar, one of 16 women who sit in the Lords through succession. She was working for the Post Office when she inherited the title in 1975. She has described herself as 'the most ordinary aristocrat in Britain'.

As a regular attender on the cross benches, she might find

■ Election 97 coverage continues on pages 12 and 13

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Anti-abortion party TV broadcast to show dead foetuses

BY EMMA WILKINS

ANTI-ABORTIONISTS yesterday threatened legal action if broadcasters refuse to show an election video featuring graphic footage of dead human foetuses.

The Prolife Alliance, which is entitled to one five-minute party election broadcast, claimed the shocking video was no worse than scenes broadcast on television recently from Rwanda and Bosnia. The film will be viewed over the next few days by an editorial policy unit at the BBC and by producers from ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5. All material broadcast must conform with standards of taste and decency set by the BBC and the Independent Television Commission.

The proposed broadcast shows remains of aborted embryos at varying stages of development. The remains were found dumped outside an abortion clinic in Houston, Texas, according to the Alliance. Bruno Quintavalle, director of the Alliance, said he was confident the video would be shown uncut.

"There are standards on taste and decency but if any censorship is attempted we believe we have strong grounds for objecting. We have lawyers who will take it further," he said. "I think it'll be difficult to have an objection to this film."

Mr Quintavalle, whose mother runs the anti-abortion pressure group Life, admitted that the film would not be suitable viewing for children.



Quintavalle: confident that video will be uncut

and said he hoped it would be broadcast after 9pm. The BBC is required not to broadcast programmes that "include anything which offends against good taste or decency or is likely to encourage or incite crime ... or be offensive to public feeling".

The ITC said it was up to ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 to decide whether the video breached guidelines on taste. ITV said: "We haven't seen the film yet but all programmes have to conform with the ITC's guidelines."

The Prolife Alliance is entitled to make one five-minute broadcast because it is fielding more than 50 candidates in the general election. The rules governing election broadcasts are established by the Committee on Party Political Broadcasts which is made up of MPs and broadcasters.

The Alliance, which is opposed to all abortions, was accused of "sensationalism" by the Birth Control Trust.

Ann Furendi, director of the charity which gives advice on contraception, said: "It is unlikely that very many people will decide to vote on any single issue. Screening this video is likely to turn people away rather than attract votes."

The Alliance, which was founded last November, received a blow this month when Mohamed Al Fayed, chairman of Harrods, withdrew a pledge of financial support after protests outside the store by pro-choice groups. The Alliance said its campaign was funded entirely by individuals and would cost less than £100,000.

It is a secular organisation that has no "overt association" with any religious group, although many members are Catholic.

The Alliance is fielding candidates in seats including those of the Heritage Secretary Virginia Bottomley, the Scottish Secretary Michael Forsyth and John Prescott, the Labour deputy leader.

Ken Livingstone, the Labour MP whose Brent East seat will see a challenge from the Alliance, said the American film was "inappropriate" and showing it would be counter-productive. Ann Winterton, Tory MP for Congleton, distanced herself from the Alliance but said it was right for viewers to see such films.

At a preview of the film in London yesterday Mr Quintavalle insisted that journalists watch shots of an abortion. Those scenes will be cut from the proposed broadcast.

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TONY BLAIR accused the Government of complacency over unemployment yesterday, predicting soaring welfare bills in spite of the recent improvement in the jobless figures if firm action was not taken to put young people to work.

The Labour leader, on a visit to the Automotive training centre in Birmingham,

said people were rightly suspicious of government statistics which showed a drop of 68,000 out of work last month. Although many people were no longer eligible to claim benefit, the figures were still far higher than when the Conservatives came to office.

"Ministers are far too complacent about this," Mr Blair said. "They are getting the figures down, but often by changing the way they calculate the numbers." Labour

would concentrate on improving the skills of the workforce and harnessing technology to give people genuine jobs. "The message we want to get across is that if we carry on with these high levels of structural unemployment, which don't show up in the figures a lot of the time, we will end up with soaring welfare bills."

Mr Blair promised an expansion of training centres such as the one he visited. He praised trainees' communica-

tion skills, which he said would improve their employment prospects together with their new qualifications.

The trainees, in turn, gave Mr Blair an enthusiastic reception, including a spontaneous round of applause in the workers' canteen.

Andrew Stevenson, a 19-year-old trainee in vehicle body repairs, said he had been persuaded to vote Labour. "He came across as very down to earth and determined to do

what he promises." The training centre, part of Handsworth College, has up to 800 trainees a week taking vocational qualifications for the car industry.

Mr Blair later returned to Westminster to rally the Parliamentary Labour Party claiming that all wings were now united.

Speaking at the PLP's last meeting before the election he said: "It is an historic and exciting time for the Labour

Party and we all hope that this is the last time that we will be meeting here in the House of Commons as an Opposition party, after 18 long years."

Mr Blair said he firmly believed in the changes he had brought about since he became leader in July 1994 and he thanked those who had been less enthusiastic but had still supported him.

He described party left-wingers as "team players" and said old and new Labour were

now pulling together. The Tories were now the party of division and Labour Party the "party of the united". The Tories' inability to run their party made voters doubt their ability to run the country.

He told MPs that the Tories had twice as much money to spend on their campaign as Labour. Party managers estimated that the Conservatives have £30-£40 million in campaign funds while Labour has £10m-£15 million.

Cup of tea may land hopeful in hot water

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT
WHITEHALL EDITOR

CANDIDATES are to face greater scrutiny of their election expenses than ever before after a decision to increase campaign spending limits.

The uprating was approved by an Order in Parliament this week, and with such a lengthy election campaign, candidates will be under great pressure to stay within the limits.

Parties have tended to turn a blind eye to campaign funding in recent by-elections, but the fevered atmosphere of this general election will keep candidates and agents on their guard. The election of any candidate who overspends during a campaign can be declared void.

The new rules allow some one fighting an average-size seat with 60,000 constituents to spend about £8,325. Donations from people such as Paul Sykes, the millionaire businessman, who has set up a £500,000 fund for Tory candidates opposed to the single currency, are not barred. But the amount must be included, within the limit.

The largest seat is the Isle of Wight, with 102,000 voters. Candidates there will be able to spend about £10,600 each on their campaign; in the Western Isles, with 25,000 voters, the total sum will be about £6,355. Each candidate is allowed to spend £4,965 and may then add to that £6.6p for every voter in the constituency if it is a county seat, or 4.2p per voter if it is a borough.

Limits for by-elections have also gone up, from £18,572 plus 20.8p per voter in a county seat, or £5.8p per voter in a borough seat, to £19,863 plus 22.2p in county seats and 16.9p in boroughs.

Election campaigns are a tricky period for would-be MPs. One of the main difficulties is that candidates can rarely buy as much as a cup of tea or a drink or even a sandwich for anyone during the campaign. "Treating" — providing food, drink or entertainment to influence a voter or voters — is forbidden as a corrupt practice.

A former MP said last night that he would not even buy drinks for his campaign team in case the sum was included in his election expenses.

Labour launches the Prescott Express

By POLLY NEWTON
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Prescott Express, carrying Labour's deputy leader on his 10,000-mile tour of marginal constituencies, took to the road yesterday. John Prescott boarded the red and black coach in Bristol after taking a rail trip round Labour's target seats in Devon and Cornwall on Tuesday.

The campaign bus, equipped with a mobile office and emblazoned with the slogan "It's good to vote", will take the deputy Labour leader as far north as Inverness. Mr Prescott, dubbed "Mr Motivator" by Tony Blair after GMTV's roving fitness instructor, said: "It is a high-profile campaign. I aim to tell people about this election and how important it is to vote. I am looking

forward to meeting as many people as possible — on council estates and in towns and cities."

The Conservatives will use a British Midland 737 passenger jet to take John Major, his soapbox and assorted journalists to and from constituencies some distance from London. A "battle bus" will ferry Mr Major around once he has arrived at his destination. Both the plane and the coach are fitted with high-tech equipment to ensure Mr Major is kept in touch with his campaign team at Conservative Central Office and with officials in Downing Street.

Sir Michael Bishop, chief executive of British Midland and a long-time Tory supporter, said he had been approached by Central Office just after Christmas

and asked if the company had an aircraft available for campaigning. "The aircraft is being provided on an agreed commercial basis," he said. British Midland provided the Conservatives with a plane during the 1992 election campaign.

Unlike Mr Major, Mr Blair has yet to make use of his battle bus, on which journalists will accompany him. On the campaign visits he has made since the election was announced, to London and Birmingham, journalists have made their own travel arrangements.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, is expected to use his battle bus for the first time on Monday. He will be flying to some destinations during the campaign; many of the Liberal Democrats' target seats are in far-flung parts of the country, from Cornwall to Scotland.

Blair accuses Tories of complacency over young jobless

By JOHN O'LEARY
AND JILL SHERMAN

TONY BLAIR accused the Government of complacency over unemployment yesterday, predicting soaring welfare bills in spite of the recent improvement in the jobless figures if firm action was not taken to put young people to work.

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John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, preparing to board his campaign coach in Bristol yesterday morning

Suffrag Major

Fiasco casts future of S

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Suffragette MP inspires Major's soapbox stand

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

NANCY ASTOR, the American-born firebrand of the women's suffrage movement, inspired John Major's electioneering style. The Prime Minister expressed his admiration yesterday for the sharp-tongued campaigner as he described his preference for her style of marketplace campaigning rather than engaging in television banter.

Mr Major disclosed his hankering for a bygone age of electioneering three days after he accepted Tony Blair's challenge to take part in Britain's first televised party leaders' debate.

In a discussion with 40 public school pupils, Mr Major expanded on the thinking that has led him to use a soapbox. His campaign style "used to be the way of politics before television and radio interfered and turned it into a contest on the box in the corner of the living room. I prefer the rumbustious nature of our politics, and so did Nancy Astor."

Lady Astor, whom he described as a "formidable lady in every respect", sat as an MP for more than 25 years after becoming the first woman to take a seat in the Commons, in 1919. She had a reputation as a political volcano, exploding intermittently on a range of issues ranging from women's pay to the "mumbo-jumbo" of those who sat in the Lords. Mr Major enthusiastically regarded his audience



John Major yesterday and Nancy Astor, the "formidable lady" whose style he so admired

with a tale of Lady Astor's put-down to a farmer who tried to catch her out by asking her how many toes a pig had. She replied: "Take off your boots and count your toes."

But the Prime Minister, who on the opening day of campaigning went on a walkabout in Luton that came close to mayhem, yesterday chose the more genteel surroundings of Pangbourne College, the 375-pupil school in Berkshire.

Mr Major chatted to pupils who demonstrated a range of outdoor pursuits taught at the school, which traditionally provides recruits for the Mer-

chant and Royal Navies. He seemed intrigued by a device intended to instil a sense of unity and leadership. Eight pupils attempted to walk with their feet strapped to the same pair of ski-style planks, using a process of cooperation and communication. The Prime Minister did not ask for a set to foster Tory team spirit.

Less successful in public relations terms was the school's decision to stage a mock rescue of a pupil left hanging from a tree. The stunt revived memories of a tragedy four years ago, when a 16-year-old pupil at the school hanged himself from a tree at



Mr Ashdown trying his hand at diabolus yesterday at a school in southwest London

Ashdown revs up for early advantage

By POLLY NEWTON
POLITICAL REPORTER

PADDY Ashdown will hit the election trail in his "battle bus" on Monday, launching the Liberal Democrats' campaign in earnest despite a plea earlier this week to other party leaders to "calm down" until nearer polling day.

The Liberal Democrat leader plans to be on the road every day next week except Good Friday. By beginning before Easter instead of waiting until after the break, Mr Ashdown hopes to win some early publicity for his party.

He will also be out and about in the West Country at the end of this week, campaigning in his own Yeovil constituency on Friday and in Taunton on Saturday.

On Tuesday, Mr Ashdown said that the public would be "bored to death" and "turned off in droves" by a six-week campaign. He said the Liberal Democrats would enter the fray "in good time".

The party's strategy of concentrating time and resources almost exclusively on the seats it believes are winnable will take Mr Ashdown to either end of the country during the election campaign.

But despite being the oldest of the three main party leaders, Mr Ashdown, at 56, has a reputation as the most energetic. Aides say his Forces background left him with a lot of stamina and an ability to get by on very little sleep.

Fiasco casts doubt over future of self-regulation

The shambles over the "cash-for-questions" report is about much more than the future of a few Tory MPs. It is really over whether the House of Commons is any longer fit or capable of regulating its own affairs.

Ever since the battles with the Crown during the 17th century, the Commons has been jealous of its privileges. These have never been absolute. In the first half of the 19th century, the House spent much time on petitions over disputed elections. These were decided by the House itself, in much the same intransigent and fractious way that privilege cases have recently been. But after 1868 these were transferred to election courts under High Court judges. The number of petitions anyway fell because of new laws against corrupt election practices and with the introduction of the secret ballot.

The same issues are now involved in the debate over self-regulation and the declaration of interests. The old system relied on the convention that "good chaps know how to behave". But this broke down during the 1970s and 1980s in response to the growth of commercial lobbying and the changing character of MPs. Members were no longer sure what was acceptable, and that allowed a few, probably a very few, to abuse the rules on declaration of

the shambles over the "cash-for-questions" report is about much more than the future of a few Tory MPs. It is really over whether the House of Commons is any longer fit or capable of regulating its own affairs.

The Nolan inquiry of two years ago was a classic exercise in conservative reformism, an attempt to repair and revive what it acknowledged was a defective system. The report argued that "because parliamentary privilege is important for reasons entirely unconnected with the standards of conduct of individual Members of Parliament, we believe that it would be highly desirable for self-regulation to continue".

The committee argued that it was therefore essential that "the resolutions of the House should be regarded as binding by all Members, and should be firmly, promptly and fairly enforced". The report proposed a new code of conduct, restrictions on the outside activities of MPs and a streamlined disciplinary procedure with a new, smaller Standards and Privileges Committee replacing two larger committees. This has involved the appointment of the Parliamentary Commis-

PETER RIDDELL
Every child
'needs an
e-mail
address'

BY ADAM FRESCO
EVERY child over the age of nine should have their own e-mail address, according to a Labour Party panel.

The report by group of business and experts, under the leadership of Dennis Stevenson, chairman-elect of the Pearson Group, says much needs to be done if schools are to take full advantage of future possibilities: the state of information technology in schools is "primitive and not improving".

Labour has pledged to use Millennium Fund cash to help to improve teacher training in information technology, but the Stevenson report says that information technology in schools is so important that "the level of funding allocated must be whatever it takes to get it right".

The priority is not re-equipping schools with hardware so much as improving teacher training and fostering the development of educational software. "A sudden explosion of hardware at the moment would be counter-productive in view of the current state of skills and confidence among many teachers and the lack of relevant software," the report adds.

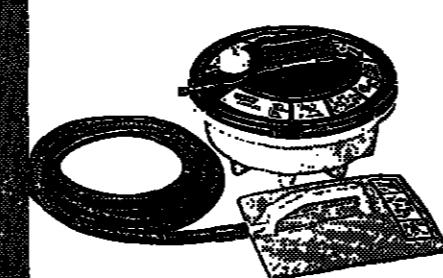
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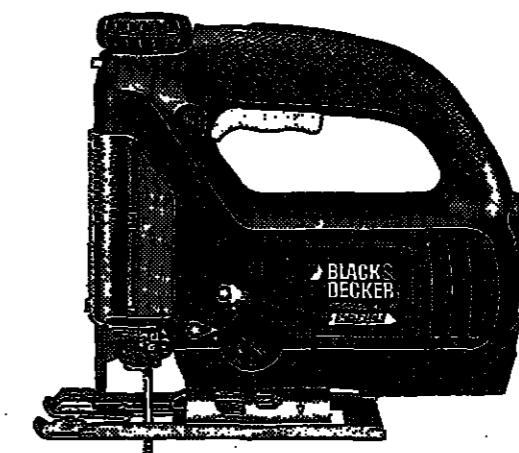


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Yeltsin daughter acts as power broker

FROM ROBIN LODGE IN MOSCOW

TYANA DYACHENKO, the younger daughter of President Yeltsin and a most powerful voice behind the Kremlin throne, played a key role in securing the appointment of Boris Nemtsov, the popular reformist governor of Nizhny Novgorod, to a top position in the new Russian Government, it was reported yesterday. The influential *Komsomolskaya Pravda* said that Ms Dyachenko, who served as her father's closest aide during last year's presidential election campaign, travelled to Nizhny Novgorod, an industrial centre on the River Volga, and spent five hours with Mr Nemtsov in an effort to persuade him to accept the job of First Deputy Prime Minister with special responsibility for fiscal reform, the regions and antitrust legislation.

In an interview with the newspaper, Mr Nemtsov confirmed that he had had talks with a close relative of the president, although he declined to name Ms Dyachenko and insisted that he had only agreed to accept the post after speaking to Mr Yeltsin personally.

Many commentators have described Mr Nemtsov's new job as a Nixonian chalice, noting that he will bear responsibility for the very problems that the Government has hitherto demonstrably failed to cope with, in

particular the task of breaking the deadlock over non-payment of pensions and wages — a debt that amounts to more than \$6 billion.

He will also have to initiate a major shake-up in the state bureaucracy, in order to cleanse it of entrenched corruption and gross inefficiency, as well as take on some of the most powerful figures in the country to break down the state monopolies.



Dyachenko: spent five hours persuading Boris Nemtsov

Mr Nemtsov conceded that in accepting the job he may have committed political suicide. "I was fully aware of the consequences of my decision," he told the newspaper. "It is a chance to

transform the situation in the country, albeit at the cost of my political future."

He said he had secured a pledge from Mr Yeltsin to be given two clear years to succeed. "That is very important. To work without the trust of the President, particularly in those areas where there are mountains of intrigue, in the criminal world, in the corrupt bureaucracy, without having the support of the President, now that would be real suicide."

Mr Nemtsov is seen as a natural ally of his fellow First Deputy Prime Minister, Anatoli Chubais, a radical market reformer whose past privatisation policies have made him a bête noir of Communists and nationalist hardliners. Unlike Mr Chubais, however, Mr Nemtsov enjoys huge personal popularity on the record of his achievements in Nizhny Novgorod, seen as a bastion of regional power and fertile ground for investment.

In harness with Mr Chubais, Mr Nemtsov would appear to represent a considerable threat to the political hold of Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, a solid, plodding figure who has taken a far more cautious attitude to the future of market reform and, despite his firm loyalty to Mr Yeltsin, is thought to share common cause with some opposition leaders.



One of a group of Russian Communists, some with posters of Stalin, outside the American Embassy in Moscow during a protest against Nato expansion

Kremlin set to exploit summit stage

FROM RICHARD BEESTON
IN HELSINKI

A BUOYANT and revitalised President Yeltsin sets off today on his first foreign trip in nearly a year, determined to re-establish Russia's presence on the world stage.

Despite pressing issues over Nato's expansion into Eastern Europe and nagging economic and social problems at home, the Helsinki summit, which officially begins this evening, will be as much about image as substance.

For the Russian leader, who has been absent largely because of illness for most of the past eight months since his re-election, the Finnish capital will provide the perfect platform to serve notice that he is very much back in power.

President Yeltsin's illness triggered a fierce succession battle among potential leaders and led to power struggles within his Government. The impression of a rudderless Russia sparked an open debate abroad about the post-Yeltsin era and who the West should back in the event of a leadership contest.

Now a firmer and alert Mr Yeltsin has regained the initiative, injecting fresh reformist talent into his Cabinet and serving notice to the West that Russia will not allow itself to be pushed around.

Leading article, page 25

Bill and Boris help Finns to rediscover a nice little earner

FROM MICHAEL BINYON IN HELSINKI

NO WONDER they keep coming back. Helsinki is the perfect summit venue — prosperous, discreet, efficient, well practised in the art of East-West diplomacy and keeping the Russians happy. It almost seems like the good old days, when the Finns made a fortune as Moscow's window on the world and neutrality was a nice little earner.

Summit has become a specialty for the Finns. Journalists' kits have been updated, limousine routes cleared, hotels commanded and trams are again flying the little flags that last fluttered when Presidents Bush and Gorbachev arrived for a hastily arranged meeting in 1990 on the Gulf crisis.

The high point for Finnish diplomacy was more than 20 years ago when this country played host to 35 European nations who spent weeks negotiating the Helsinki accords.

In 1975 heads of state from all the signatories arrived for one of the biggest summits yet — which was to make Helsinki part of the international diplomatic vocabulary.

They came back again, a different cast and a larger group, 20 years later to reaffirm these basic documents on human rights and European stability.

with the political daring of having just reshuffled his team in meeting another who has difficulty moving and appears as paralysed abroad as he is at home. Still, Finnish doctors are renowned for their skill and discretion, and several will be standing by in case Mr Clinton's tendon takes turn for the worse.

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OVERSEAS NEWS 15

Crack troops cross Adriatic in effort to stop influx as 'undesirables' are sent back to Tirana

Italy declares state of emergency over Albanian refugees

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN BARI

THE Italian Government yesterday declared a state of emergency throughout the country until June 30 to cope with the influx of more than 10,000 refugees from Albania.

Italian radio reported that troops and armour from the crack San Marco Brigade — the Italian equivalent of the SAS — were heading for the Albanian port of Durres in the warship *San Giusto* to secure a beachhead with the apparent aim of preventing further departures of refugees. Officials said the fleeing Albanians were being offered passages across the Adriatic by unscrupulous Albanian mafiosi.

Most of the refugees who have flooded in on leaky and overcrowded boats across the 40 miles of the Adriatic in the past week have come to southern Italy, but some are being transferred to central and northern Italian towns as makeshift refugee centres in the south fill up.

The authorities have grown increasingly alarmed over the number of "hardened criminals" whom they say have taken advantage of the exodus to enter Italy in the past few days. Yesterday's decree, issued after a two-hour crisis meeting of the centre-left Cabi-

net, provides for the repatriation to Albania of "unwelcome guests" who "pose a threat to public order".

They are defined as those with a criminal record in Albania and any refugees who have "caused trouble" since their arrival in Italy. Chinook helicopters of the Italian Navy yesterday ferried 300 of these "undesirables" back to Alba-

I am keen on computers, but there is nothing for me in Albania. I want to study here

nia. Giorgio Napolitano, the Interior Minister, said Italy had planned for an influx of 3,500 immigrants, but "the wave and rhythm of arrivals from Albania have exceeded every possible forecast".

Lamberto Dini, the Foreign Minister, said after talks with the EU mission to Albania and the Albanian Foreign Minister, Arjan Starova, that

the exodus posed "a threat to the whole of Europe".

But members of the right-wing Opposition said the Government had done "too little, too late" and Italy was in danger of being overrun.

The decree provides for emergency funding to help local authorities to set up temporary shelters. But officials made clear that the refugees would be given sanctuary only for up to two months, after which they would be expected to return home.

Elections are due in Albania in June, and Italy is to provide food aid and other help to enable the Albanian authorities to re-establish order.

Italy's hope that most of the immigrants will go home may be a forlorn one, judging by the reaction of the refugees at one of the main camps yesterday. At Bari military airfield, where a temporary town of army tents and mobile homes had sprung up since the influx began a week ago, Astri, a 28-year-old butcher's assistant from Tirana, said: "I have a brother in Bologna and another in Pisa. I intend to join them, with my wife and children." He and his family had spent 20 hours on a broken-down fishing boat before



Two Albanian children shelter in a blanket provided by the Italian Red Cross in Brindisi yesterday after being rescued by the coastguard

being rescued by Italian coastguards. Did he intend to go back? "Albania has no future," said Astri.

We were joined by a crowd of Albanian men, women and children, dressed in the blue overall, the Italian civil defence authorities have provided. None admitted to having paid Albanian mafiosi for the

crossing; all claimed to have lost everything in the collapsed pyramid schemes that sparked the unrest.

What if President Berisha was defeated in the elections in June, and replaced by an opposition leader such as Fatos Nano? "They are all the same," they roared in unison. "Hoxha [the late Communist

dictator], Berisha, Nano — it makes no difference."

Klodi, a 19-year-old economics student from Vlore and the son of an Albanian naval officer, told me he was already homesick. But, like the others, he wanted to stay. Dressed smarter than the rest in a leather jacket, he was the kind of young Albanian — bright,

articulate, fluent in English and Italian — whom Mr Berisha must have hoped would form the nucleus of a new and modern Albanian elite. "I am keen on computers," he said. "But there is nothing for me in Albania. I want to study here."

Bari residents still have vivid memories of the even bigger exodus in 1991, when tens of thousands of Albanians fled after the collapse of communism. At a refugee centre in the rundown port area, in the shadow of Bari's magnificent Norman fortress, charity workers said the situation was under control compared with the influx six years ago.

'Terrorists' forced to fly home

By TOM WALKER

ALBANIANS unceremoniously dumped back at Tirana airport yesterday said that they had been forced to sign documents they could not understand by the Italian authorities.

When they were later handed Albanian translations, they learnt that they had been branded "terrorists" and a "threat to public order"; by then, however, they were being herded on to Chinook twin-rotor transport helicopters and flown back across the Adriatic.

Yesterday three helicopter loads arrived in the morning and another four in the afternoon, returning a total of

about 300 reluctant Albanians. "They said we are terrorist people. I was never a terrorist in my life," said Shpjetim Arifaj, 31, who claimed to have an MA in computer sciences from Dublin University. "We put our signatures on pieces of paper not knowing what they were. Later they gave us papers in Albanian saying we were terrorists. None of us was a terrorist."

After landing at the recently secured airport, the deportees were led at a jog across the ground by police and soldiers — a show of strength for the international cameras. Albanian state television, which explained, were empty.

Violence halts work of Mother Teresa's nuns



Tom Walker in Scutari reports on the thuggery that is preventing 14 sisters from feeding 150 hungry families

Tom Walker in Scutari

THE charitable work of the world's most famous Albanian, Mother Teresa, has come to a halt in her homeland as a humanitarian catastrophe draws nearer.

Nuns in Scutari, the north Albanian base for the Missionaries of Charity, have described their ordeal last week as rebels took over the town and a fire threatened to engulf their compound.

The sisters were saved by the prompt action of local priests and armed guards sent by the Roman Catholic Church. However, with Scutari now cut off from its vital supply routes to Montenegro, food prices have trebled and many staples are unavailable. "We have always visited the poorest of the poor, but now we cannot even give them their ration," Sister Maria Goretti, the convent's Mother Superior, said in the shadow of the destroyed buildings. "This is the devil's work. We are only still here because of the Lord's intervention."

The 14 sisters at the mission look after 25 handicapped children, who have been terrified by the violence that grips Scutari each night. When the rebellion began last Wednesday night, the bank behind the sisters' compound was looted and set alight, and soon two sides of the small courtyard were ablaze.

"They were stealing, burning and shooting in the air," Sister Maria Goretti said. "We had to throw the children out into the street as the fire

drew in. We thought we were the next building to go."

Local Jesuits sheltered the children for the night and the brothers of Mother Teresa's order, from nearby Bushat, have helped the sisters to bring the mission's life back to normal. However, the food the sisters deliver to 150 families — oil, sugar, pasta, flour and other staples — has run out.

"We only have enough for the children now," Sister Maria Goretti said. "We have to think ahead and there could be a great hunger here."

Brother Simon, the order's superior in Bushat, said a "miracle" had saved the sisters.

"There was absolute chaos here. They destroyed far more than in the South."

Among the seven brothers

in Bushat is Brother Simon,

the feast of St Joseph with an ordination at Scutari's Catholic cathedral, the largest in the Balkans but used as a volleyball court under Enver Hoxha, the former dictator.

Outside, even though uniformed police were back on the streets, Scutari encapsulated the poverty and unease of northern Albanian towns. A dead horse blocked the road to the cathedral and leeks were the only vegetables available.

Uncollected rubbish rotted on the pavements. Children sold clips of Kalashnikov ammunition for \$5 (£3) apiece.

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Gore faces unexpected rivals in White House race*

UNTIL this month, it was hard to imagine that Al Gore, the American Vice-President, would face serious rivals from within his party in his race for the White House in 2000.

However, the campaign fundraising scandals have tarnished his image and encouraged opponents to think the unthinkable: President Clinton's designated successor is vulnerable. The race to become the Democratic candidate for President is now on.

At least four contenders are preparing to fight for the nomination: Richard Gephardt, the House Majority Leader, Senator John Kerry

Cash scandals have sullied the image of the Vice-President and cast doubt on his presidential nomination in 2000, reports Bronwen Maddox from Washington

from Massachusetts. Senator Bob Kerrey from Nebraska and Bill Bradley, a former New Jersey senator. Senator Paul Wellstone from Minnesota is also reported to be mulling over his chances.

The contest will open up the barely-concealed rift in the Democratic Party. New Democrats, headed by Mr Clinton

and Mr Gore, march to the President's refrain that the era of big government is over. Old Democrats still pledge allegiance to extensive government welfare and health programmes. They support the minimum wage and oppose measures to liberalise trade, such as the Nafta pact with Mexico and Canada.

The depth of the division was reflected in last year's vote on welfare reform legislation. Democrats in the House of Representatives voted by 98 in favour and 98 against; just weeks later, Senate Democrats split 23-23 on the same question.

Two factors will determine which side of the party dominates the next race for the White House: the state of the economy in 2000, and the legacy of the campaign finance dispute. If the economy is weak, the old Democrats, proclaiming "we told you so", may be able to rebuild their political clout. If economic

growth is still strong, and Mr Clinton has walked through the fire of investigations with as little injury as he appears to have done in the Whitewater case, then Mr Gore's candidacy looks safe. If the economy is healthy, but the Clinton-Gore team is tarred with the fund-raising scandal, then the new Democrats will find their way clear to challenge the Vice-President.

At this point, Mr Gore's most prominent rival is Mr Gephardt. A moderate at the start of his 25-year career, he is now associated with the old Democrat wing of the party. He called welfare reform "a

dangerous step in the wrong direction" and attacked the North American Free Trade Agreement; he opposes Mr Clinton's plan to expand the agreement to other countries in Latin America.

However, Mr Gephardt's problem is that he is perceived as a nearly-man, cautious not charismatic. He ran for President in 1988 but his campaign fizzled out after the New Hampshire primary.

Two years ago, when Republicans won control of the House, Newt Gingrich's vigour as Speaker upstaged Mr Gephardt's performance. Unless Democrats regain control of

the House next year, Mr Gephardt may not have the chance to reverse that image.

In the past few weeks, Mr Wellstone has also emerged as a possible old Democrat challenger. However, Mr Gore's aides fear that more dangerous rivals could emerge from the new Democrat wing of the party.

John Kerry, a Vietnam veteran, has shaken off some of his reputation for aloofness and arrogance, but his marriage to Teresa Heinz, the heiress to the pickle and ketchup empire, has proved an uncertain political blessing. Her estimated fortune of

almost \$800 million (£500 million) provoked sharp comments from fellow Democrats.

The appeal of Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, another Vietnam veteran, is hard to assess as he has made his independence from the Democratic Party his main pitch, even though he is chairman of the Democratic campaign committee in the state.

Bill Bradley, the former New Jersey senator and basketball star, is also reckoned to have charisma. He has strongly criticised liberal elements in the Democratic Party but is believed to have limited influence.

Gingrich's former allies accuse him of betrayal

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

THE fortunes of Newt Gingrich, already at a low ebb, plummeted still further yesterday after conservative politicians accused their House Speaker of betraying the crown jewel of his Republican "revolution".

His proposal to shelve demands for tax relief as a compromise to balance the federal budget by 2002 left Mr Gingrich in an increasingly fragile state within his party.

And it divided Republican budget leaders as they met at the White House before President Clinton's departure for Helsinki yesterday.

Mr Gingrich has become a symbol for Republican inaction since President Clinton's re-election and a constant reminder of the dervish-like activity that marked his accession to the Speaker's chair in 1995.

His latest budget proposal, immediately hailed by Mr Clinton as an opportunity for bipartisan agreement, was viewed by conservatives on Capitol Hill as another desperate attempt by Mr Gingrich to improve his popularity among the electorate.

It places him in direct confrontation with Dick Armey, the House majority leader, who is seen as a possible successor, and Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, both of whom are opposed to any capitulation over tax reductions.

"It is a signal that the Speaker is willing to jettison

the tax cut in the budget reconciliation Bill that will be passed and signed by the President," said David McIntosh, an Indiana Republican, in a letter signed by 32 House colleagues. "Any plan that does not include meaningful tax relief must be soundly rejected."

Conservatives are most angered by what they describe as "betrayal" by Mr Gingrich despite their backing for him when he admitted violating House ethics rules. He was formally reprimanded in January and fined \$300,000 (£189,000), but was not asked to resign.

The once revolutionary firebrand is so much a shadow of his former self that he stalks

the corridors of Capitol Hill almost unnoticed and often ignored. Former allies had always been wary of Mr Gingrich's wavering ideology and his ability to melt in the presence of Mr Clinton, but are said to be no longer prepared to forgive the man who engineered Republican control of the House of Representatives for the first time in 40 years. Many believe that in his attempt to compromise the Speaker is no longer acting like a conservative.

"He holds these regular meetings to define priorities and talks about the Republicans winning elections in 2000 and beyond," David Brooks, of the conservative *Weekly Standard*, said. "He has plans for the next 20 years, but not the next two weeks. It just looks like he is flailing around in search of popularity rather than personally leading the conservative movement."

Instead of tackling important issues, Mr Gingrich is seen to have concentrated on "feelgood" policies such as releasing money for family planning programmes overseas, which other Republicans view as a means of promoting abortion.

To make matters worse, he has proposed a trip to China early next month, despite concerns over human rights and the deepening fundraising controversy with its Asian connections, that has engulfed the White House and is trickling towards Capitol Hill.



Gingrich: his fortunes are continuing to fall



President Clinton, resting his injured leg, briefs the press in the White House in preparation for his meeting this week with Russia's President Yeltsin in Helsinki

'Witch' beaten to death in Russia

MOSCOW: A mother of six was beaten to death with a hammer in a village in Belgorod province in south Russia for suspected witchcraft, the daily newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported yesterday (Robin Lodge writes).

The woman, a professional fortuneteller, was apparently attacked by two men angered by her predictions, police said. Her name has not been released. The attackers also assaulted her three elder children, and a daughter aged 14 is in intensive care. Two suspects are being questioned by police.

Charges of witchcraft have grown in the former Soviet Union, where many disaffected people have been turning to the supernatural to find comfort.

Israeli killed in Lebanon

MARJAYOUN: One Israeli soldier was killed and three others wounded when Muslim guerrillas attacked a patrol in southern Lebanon, sources with the South Lebanon Army said. The guerrillas fired rockets, rocket-propelled grenades and machine-guns at the Israeli in Arroum on the edge of Israel's south Lebanon occupation zone. Two of the wounded soldiers were seriously hurt. Six Israeli soldiers have been killed in Lebanon this year, and 26 wounded. (Reuters)

New choice for CIA chief

WASHINGTON: President Clinton has decided to nominate George Tenet, right, the current acting head of the CIA, to serve as the spy agency's Director, senior Administration officials said. "The President believes he [Tenet] is well qualified for the post," said one senior White House official. "He is more than satisfied." On Monday, Anthony Lake withdrew his nomination after harsh Senate committee confirmation hearings. (Reuters)



Singapore stifles stench

SINGAPORE: The number of Singaporeans convicted for urinating in lifts fell last year to 14 from 40, the *Straits Times* said. The old sensors sealed lift doors when a puddle was detected, sometimes leading to false alarms. A new kit will improve detection since it will react only to urine. (Reuters)

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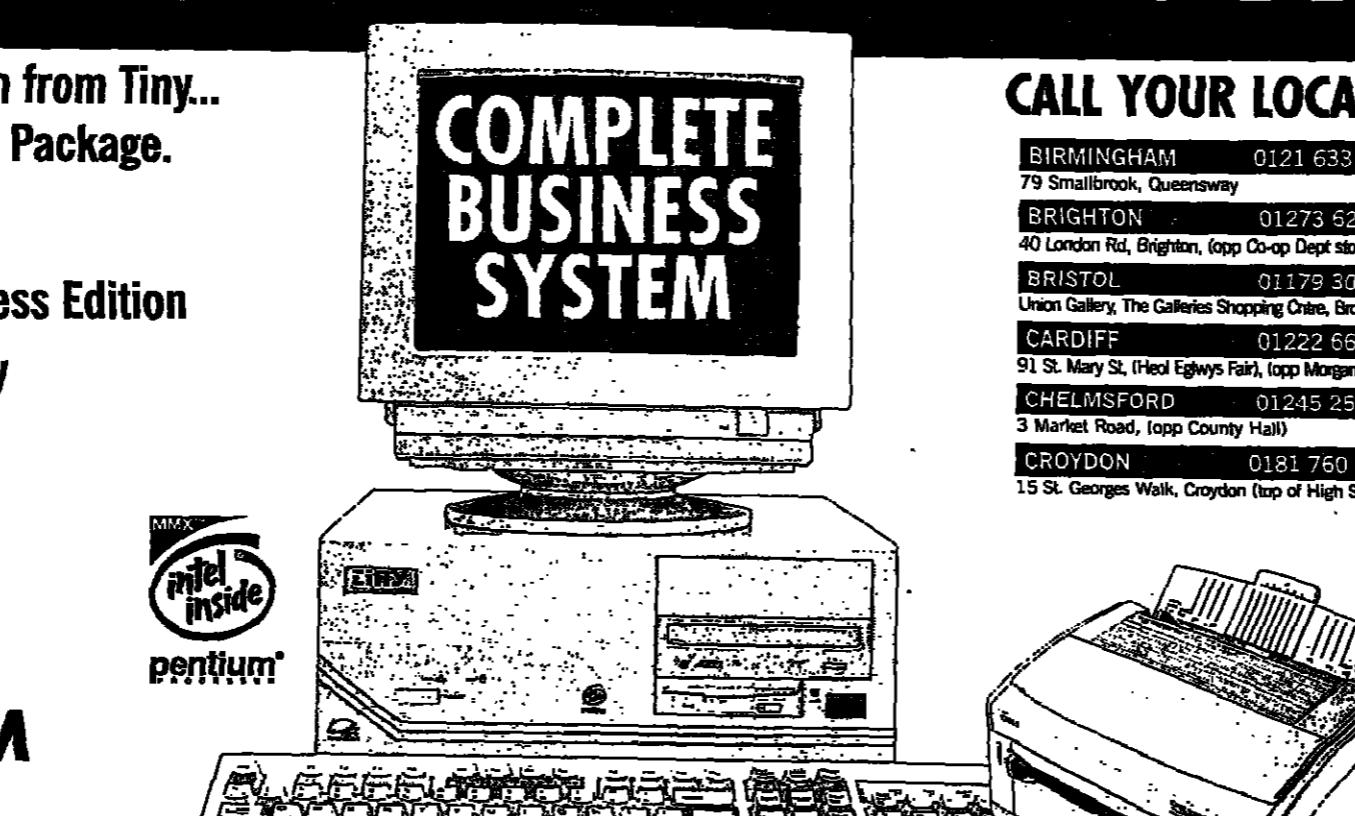
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EDUCATIONAL PRICES

Supreme Court rejects petitions to halt work on Jewish homes in east Jerusalem

Egypt and Syria warn Israel of war risk

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

EGYPT and Syria warned Israel yesterday that it was pushing the Middle East into a new confrontation as the Supreme Court rejected two petitions to halt bulldozers constructing a settlement for 32,000 Jews in annexed east Jerusalem.

Its bluntest attack yet on Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's Prime Minister, President Mubarak of Egypt said: "If this settlement is built, this will not be the end of the whole thing. It will be the beginning of a new era of violence we would like to avoid."

The leader of Egypt, the first Arab state to make peace with Israel, added angrily: "The use of force and arrogance, the arrogance of power, will never lead to a solution at all. The issue of Jerusalem will never be solved by the use of bulldozers. This only increases problems and hatred."

With Palestinian street protests planned for tomorrow, the traditional day of Muslim prayers, and rising fears of a spark that could ignite a new Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Farouk al-Shara, Syria's Foreign Minister, issued a warning that Har Homa would lead to

bloodshed on a wider scale. The Damascus press quoted him as claiming that the building of 6,500 homes — the first to be occupied in 1999 — would not succeed.

"But he [Netanyahu] might succeed in escalating tension in the region and in dragging Arabs into confrontation that he would be responsible for. The world realises that Netanyahu does not want peace but is putting the region on the verge of new wars."

Amid the mounting Arab rhetoric, including calls in the Jordanian media for the recall of Jordan's Ambassador to Tel Aviv, the official Syrian daily *Tishreen* compared Mr Netanyahu's policies with those of Hitler, "who invaded Europe, destroyed human beings, expelled people and seized their properties".

In combative mood, Mr Netanyahu, 47, flatly rejected Arab and international criticism of Tuesday's go-ahead for the building on land conquered from Jordan in 1967 and known to Arabs as Jabal Abu Ghneim. The Prime Minister said that the disputed pine-studded hillside was part of the capital of the Jewish



Israeli soldiers and Palestinian demonstrators scuffle as bulldozers move in to clear the way for construction of the Har Homa settlement

state. "I cannot imagine any peace process under which we cannot build in our capital," he told Israel radio. "I do not agree to any peace that prevents us from building in Jerusalem."

His close political ally, Ehud Olmert, the Likud Mayor of Jerusalem and a driving force behind Har Homa, dismissed President Mubarak's

warning, telling an Israeli radio reporter: "No one is in a position to dictate to Israel what we do in Jerusalem."

Describing the Israeli stance, the Tel Aviv paper *Maariv* said that the Likud Government had "gambl[ed] for the whole pot" in going ahead with Har Homa, "risking a worsening of the conflict with the Palestinians.

After calling a crisis meeting with European consuls-general in mainly Arab east Jerusalem, Faical Hussain, the leading PLO official in Jerusalem, told reporters: "Mr Netanyahu's policy has killed the peace process."

The Israeli Prime Minister took the unusual step yesterday of publicly rejecting an American denial of his charge

that Yassir Arafat, the Palestinian Authority leader, had given Islamic militants the green light to resume suicide attacks against Jewish targets.

"We have solid information from the Israeli intelligence. We see contacts of the PLO with Hamas and other organisations ... If there is terrorism, we will see the Palestinian Authority as responsible."

Spanish scholar finds links between Basque and Etruscan tongues

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN
IN MADRID

EUSKERA, the tongue-twisting language of the Basques, could prove the key that unlocks the ancient secrets of Etruscan, a mysterious language that has defied all attempts to decipher it for centuries.

According to Jorge Alonso, a Spanish historian of language, Euskeria and Etruscan are closely related in a book to be published here shortly, *Deciframiento de la lengua etrusca* (Deciphering Etruscan), he describes the likeness of

their vocabularies and syntax, concluding that by "using Euskeria as a tool", linguists should be able to translate Etruscan texts and tablets that have lain unread for millennia.

Señor Alonso's thesis should also cast new light on the origins of the Etruscans — once the inhabitants of what is now Tuscany. If their language is related to Euskeria, it is likely that their origins lay in northern Africa. As Señor Alonso has written, Euskeria is derived from ancient Iberian, the language spoken on the Iberian peninsula before the Romans stamped it out.

Archaeologists are certain that the Iberians came from North Africa, migrating to Spain to escape climatic changes. The question raised is: did the Etruscans, too, leave North Africa for a new home on the Italian peninsula? If their language is related to Euskeria, it is not an unlikely theory.

Señor Alonso's studies were conducted at the Etruscan necropolis near Rome and Perugia. There, the startling similarity between certain Etruscan funerary inscriptions and Euskeria words convinced him of a linguistic kinship. The most impor-

tant proof was the Etruscan word *dalle*, found in graveyards, which is virtually identical to the Euskeria word *dalle* or *scythe*, commonly used as a synonym for "death". Another phrase in Euskeria, *Baltur aetean-nas*, meaning "I am at the gate of the river of darkness", resembles closely an inscription on an Etruscan necropolis near Perugia: *Velti-ur-a-tin-nas*.

If Euskeria were to assist in cracking the language of the Etruscans, whose civilisation was at its height in the last quarter of the 6th century BC, Señor Alonso will have

helped to solve one of mankind's oldest linguistic riddles. Etruscan is a language with, until now, no known structural or historical relationship to any other. It is known to us from inscriptions, mainly epitaphs and dedications, written in an alphabet probably derived from early Greek. It was written in the hourographon style, "turning like an ox ploughing", with the direction of writing alternating with each line: first right-to-left then left-to-right.

Leading article, page 25

Classical Greek	Etruscan	Early Latin	Modern Roman
A	A	A	A
B	B	B	B
C	C	C	C
D	D	D	D
E	E	E	E
F	F	F	F
G	G	G	G
H	H	H	H
I	I	I	I
K	K	K	K
L	L	L	L
M	M	M	M
N	N	N	N
O	O	O	O

Etruscan's alphabetic links

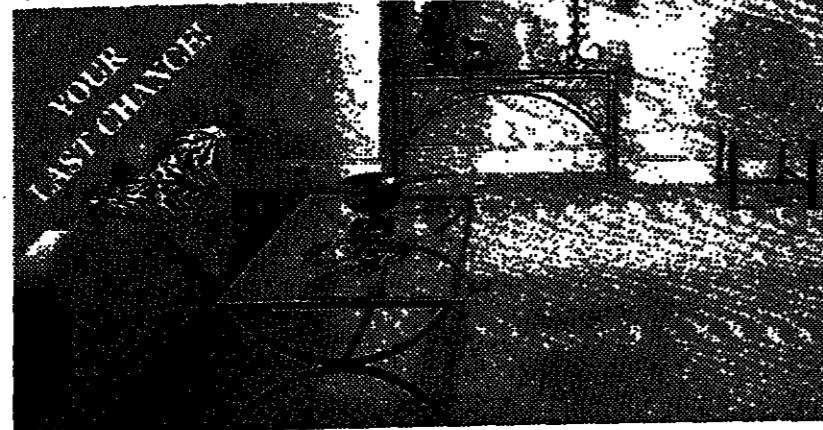
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Zaire in limbo as Premier is ousted

FROM SAM KILEY
IN KINSHASA

ZAIRE drifted leaderless yesterday after its Prime Minister was ousted at the army's insistence and rebels, who control a fifth of the country, vowed to continue their advance.

The removal of Leon Kengo wa Dondo defied the wishes of President Mobutu and signalled an end to the ailing dictator's influence on the vast Central African nation. Members of parliament who voted to depose Mr Kengo on Tuesday said many of them had been offered financial incentives to ensure that the Prime Minister lost a vote of no confidence.

"The army had grown fed up with the political paralysis and wanted to get rid of the Government. It would have been too dangerous if they had moved openly against the Prime Minister ... so the army pushed parliament into voting against him," an MP said.

Mr Kengo arrived in Nairobi yesterday for talks on the Zaire crisis, claiming that he still had the support of the "political class". However, Zaire's state radio broadcast that he had been dismissed for "incompetence in the face of the civil war", blaming him for the army's rout by the anti-Mobutu rebels.

General Mahele Leiko Bokongo, the Chief of Staff who was jeered by soldiers when he exhorted them to fight the Democratic Alliance of Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire before Kisangani fell last weekend, insisted yesterday that he had no part in overthrowing Mr Kengo.

The army is constitutionally forbidden to take part in politics," he insisted.

By late yesterday the country was still without a Prime Minister. General Mahele, meanwhile, appealed to "the Government" to give him the means to fight the rebels, led by Laurent Kabila.

His appeal came as a rebel spokesman said they would continue advancing towards Mbupi-Mayi, the capital of the diamond-rich East Kasai province. They hoped to reach the area before soldiers who had fled there started to destroy mining installations.

• Turning a blind eye on colony



Sir Percy, who appears not to have read the poll's verdict on Chris Patten

NO PRESENT-DAY resentment endures more bitterly than Sir Percy Cradock's towards Chris Patten, the Hong Kong Governor.

Sir Percy has a constant theme — that he has expounded in a book, articles, interviews and public addresses. That theme is simple: that through artful diplomacy, Britain, which held almost no cards, concluded agreements with China in 1984 and after "which should have carried the colony smoothly through the watershed of 1997 and well into the next century with stability and a fair level of democracy". However, because of "politics", Sir Percy believes that Hong Kong is now "worse off in terms of protection and democracy than it need have been".

The latest expression of his position comes in the magazine *Prospect*. However, Sir Percy, a former ambassador to Beijing and an adviser on China to Margaret Thatcher and John Major, should declare his interests. First, he directed — from London — the negotiations leading up to the 1984 Joint Declaration — which he later called "a Rolls-Royce of an agreement" and he understandably feels hard done by that this limousine will not survive the July



HONG KONG COUNTDOWN

handover. The other interest is that Sir Percy is an adviser to financial institutions with interests in China and is a director of Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, published by Robert Kwok who has strong connections in Beijing.

Sir Percy believes Hong Kong's fate is "the story of a bad mistake" — the "bad mistake" he sees as Mr Patten. "As a rising politician he [Patten] had his name to make... he made instant democracy his slogan, giving Beijing a pretext for dismembering the wholly-elected Legislative Council and 'repealing' libertarian legislation passed without its consent".

The result, feels Sir Percy, has been five years of confrontation and the isolation of a Governor "increasingly out of touch with local public opinion". On this, Sir Percy has not read the polls; they show much support for Mr Patten.

the 1984 accord, showed their rage at the future sovereign.

That is when the situation changed. That is when the then Governor, Sir David Wilson, angered Beijing by condemning the killings and calling for the construction of a new airport to "raise morale".

Sir David promptly found himself nearly as isolated as Mr Patten is today and the airport delays were used as a stick to beat the British. Ever since, people in Hong Kong have favoured public figures labelled "black hands" in Beijing. All this began long before Mr Patten lost his seat in Bath in the general election of 1992.

Sir Percy suggests that once again we have seen "the besetting sin of British foreign policy: the incapacity to put ourselves in the shoes of the other side".

The real "other side" is Hong Kong, seen by some Foreign Office Sinologists as "a whingeing place for which diplomats have bled". Anyone who lives here, and is not one of the 100 per cent docile and silent business community, could tell him that it was the blood on the Tiananmen paving stones, not John Major and Chris Patten, who undid Sir Percy's hard work.



Steve and Sarah McSevich show off their son on HMS Plover in Hong Kong yesterday. Sam, who arrived last month, is the last baby born to a British forces couple before the handover to China

Tutu faces treatment as cancer spreads

FROM INIGO GILMORE
IN JOHANNESBURG

ARCHBISHOP Desmond Tutu announced yesterday that his prostate cancer has spread and he will undergo a combination of hormone treatment and radiotherapy to try to check its advance.

The Nobel laureate, who underwent initial prostate surgery in January, said he had been advised by doctors in the United States that the cancer is believed to have penetrated beyond the prostate gland and that radiotherapy was now the "best option".

While he plans to maintain a "normal schedule", the news has raised concern as to how his illness will affect his work as chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. After his three-month hormone treatment in Cape Town, he will spend two months undergoing radiotherapy at an American clinic.

His absence, and fears that he may be unable to work to full capacity if his health deteriorates further, are seen as worrying developments for the commission, which is nearly halfway through its two years.

Tensions have been running high lately over its sensitive investigations, with politicians criticising its work and angry exchanges between the National Party and the African National Congress. The Archbishop has been widely praised for the delicate and precise manner in which he has dealt with many of the problems the commission has faced, and there is concern that without him the process of uncovering South Africa's bloody past could run into trouble.

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Kim pins blame for food crisis on party

FROM ROBERT WHYMAN
IN TOKYO

MEMBERS of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party have been rebuked by Kim Jong Il over the desperate food shortage that has left even the armed forces without supplies, a South Korean newspaper said yesterday.

"A state of anarchy is being created because of food problems. I do not know what party members are doing," Mr Kim, revered as "Dear Leader", was quoted as saying. "People are found almost everywhere scrounging for foodstuffs, and even the People's Armed Forces have not received food supplies," he said.

The criticism, reported by *Chosun Ilbo*, was made in a speech by Mr Kim, the son and political heir of North Korea's founder, Kim Il Sung, who died three years ago. The newspaper, which published scoops on last month's defection in China of Hwang Jang Yop, North Korea's top ideologue, said that it had obtained the text of the speech made on December 7 in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital.

Mr Kim was quoted as saying: "American imperialists will make an all-out attack on us at any moment if they come to know that even foodstuffs for the military are virtually exhausted. Strengthening the armed forces must be our priority." He urged party members to find ways to feed the military.

His recriminations hint at tensions within the party hierarchy. Mr Hwang's defection apparently came after arguments over how to deal with the food crisis.

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Tough glamour met soft tailoring in a glossy French Fashion Week...



Left: JEAN PAUL GAULTIER, gleaming suits and woolly scarves turned up the heat. Right: GIVENCHY, Alexander McQueen combined creativity with commercial appeal



Great moments beneath the wrapping

During Paris Fashion Week, which finished yesterday, many of the shows played to the excesses of the industry. They were all about flashy packaging, but when the layers of make-up, loud music and colourful set dressing were peeled away, ideas were often thin on the ground. Despite a showing of excellent — some might say vintage — collections for Autumn/Winter 1997, the prevailing mood in the city was gloomy.

However, there were moments of greatness. Alexander McQueen's first ready-to-wear collection for Givenchy was shocking. Good, shocking, mind you. The elegantly tailored suits (best in purple leather), watered-silk kimono jackets, grey trouser suits, punched creamy leather and leopard-skin lace not only made a strong style statement but also huge commercial sense. This collection proved that the young punk from East London is now ready to play with the big boys.

Menswear looks are Ann Demeulemeester's forte. Her low-slung trousers have become the template for the season, so it was great to see her take another step forward. Soft leather and jersey dresses were draped and belted about the body, while oversize suits in salt-and-pepper wool looked enviably comfortable.

Yohji Yamamoto offered a tailored silhouette straight out of the 1940s and 1950s photographs of Irving Penn. Fly-front suits in herringbone tweed, sometimes trimmed

PARIS

Fashion journalist of the year



IAIN R. WEBB

with fur, were shown next to rhinestone-studded jackets in black jersey, while a tuxedo suit in the same fabric merged day and night.

There was a blurring of glamour girls and bunch boys on several catwalks. Martine Sitbon's slashed and sequined chiffon was worn with strictly tailored leather; Cerruti's clean-cut tailoring, tweed coats and hand-knit sweaters were offset with soft jersey and, maybe, too much filmy chiffon; and Sonia Rykiel offered jersey trouser suits and louche velvet bathrobe coats.

There was a clash of cultures, colour and cloth at Christian Lacroix, Rifat Ozbek and Emanuel Ungaro. Each showed their own version of "melting pot" glamour.

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How Scots Tories could surprise us

Even Michael Forsyth may just hold on, says Magnus Linklater

It is sixty years since the impending return of the Unionist candidate for Ross and Cromarty from a holiday in Casablanca prompted the *Scottish Daily Record* to break into verse:

He is coming! The whisper thrills From the Muslim mosques afar. On the lonely Ross-shire hills Men watch for a moving star, For a glimmer and a gleam of wings. For a throb on the morning clear, And their eyes speak wonderful things. And their hearts say, "Hush! He is near!"

The candidate in question was Randolph Churchill, Winston's son, flying in to challenge Malcolm MacDonald, Ramsay's son, in the famous by-election of February 1938. There may have been the merest touch of irony in the *Record's* poem, since Randolph was not expected to make much headway in this far-flung constituency. Nor did he. Then, as now, the Unionist cause found little favour in the north. When Brendan Bracken cabled Winston Churchill in the course of the campaign, it was to report: "More stags than Tories in Cromarty."

The *Record's* quaint doggerel suggests that those were gentler times. I doubt whether that ferocious Labour-supporting newspaper will be resorting to anything as subtle as irony (or poetry) this time around. Its aim, along with the powerful Labour party machine in Scotland, will be to expunge the last traces of Toryism from a part of the United Kingdom where its adherents are already an endangered species.

The handful of Conservative MPs, including three Cabinet ministers, some of them with wafer-thin majorities, looks, on paper, as likely to survive as the rural lairds they once represented.

So why are these men smiling? Why is their mood one of relentless optimism? Why, unlike their colleagues in the south, do they predict, not only that they might even gain a seat or two against the prevailing trend? For that is what they maintain. I have this week been offered a serious bet at very reasonable odds that the Tories in Scotland will raise their present total of ten seats to a round dozen (so repeating the success of 1992, when they also gained two) and that all three Cabinet ministers will survive. One explanation could be that this is simply the jauntiness of the gallows, a case of *Morituri te salutant*. But the claim merits closer inspection.

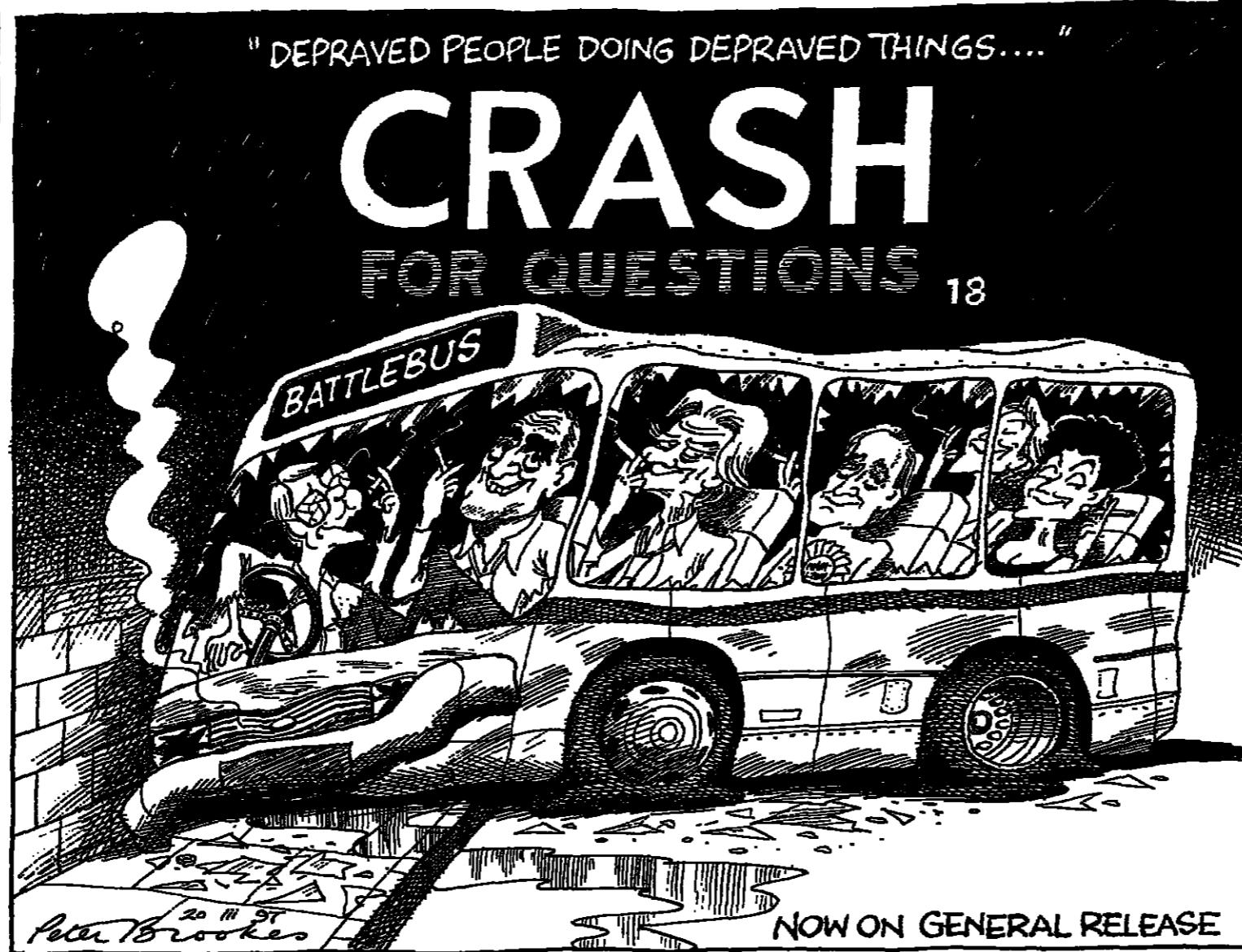
It rests on the proposition that the Conservative cause, which once enjoyed majority support in Scotland, has touched rock bottom, and can only, from now on, go up. It is sustained by the belief that new Labour has failed to win the support north of the border that it enjoys in the South. And it is nurtured by the barnstorming performance of the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth, with his taunts about Labour's "tartan tax" and his vigorous defence of Scottish interests. It

Rifkind, Lang and Forsyth may buck the trend

Where they are on stronger ground is in arguing that some of their high-profile candidates may hold out against the trend. Ian Lang, fighting the Nationalists in Galloway, will benefit from his ministerial standing and his reputation as a solid performer on behalf of Scottish trade. Here, the strength of the candidate and an effective local organisation could well hold off the challenge. Malcolm Rifkind, confronted in his Edinburgh Pentlands constituency by another QC, Labour's Linda Clarke, has the record accorded to a "weakened" figure who, as Foreign Secretary, has rarely been off the television. There is in Edinburgh a strong sense of pride in a local son who has achieved success on the national stage while remaining loyal to his home town.

And then there is Michael Forsyth. His Stirling seat is among the country's most vulnerable, and Labour will channel any resources necessary to win it. Their candidate, Anne McGuire, needs a swing of only 0.6 per cent, while boundary changes reduce Mr Forsyth's 703 majority to less than a third of that. But the odds against him last time seemed every bit as great, and he held on. His fame, or notoriety, in Scotland could scarcely be greater, and his policies have won him respect if not affection.

Against all the odds, therefore, he might hold Stirling. My betting Tory friend goes further. He claims that Mr Forsyth will not only win, but will romp home with a majority up to four figures. And so, aided by the strong personal qualities of their candidates, the Tories in Scotland just might surprise us all. It's a crazy enough idea to merit a few lines of verse.



What is Blair burying?

The glorious revolution on May 1 will not be the death of Toryism; it is the death of socialism

The announcement of the election seems to have crystallised the attitude of the electorate. As in 1906, 1945 or 1979, this is probably going to be one of the elections that reveals a shift of consciousness in British politics. The opinion polls and the by-elections say there is going to be a Labour landslide, probably comparable in scale to the Labour victory in 1945, perhaps even to the Liberal victory in 1906. This victory will be the result of a shift in public perception which has been developing for a long time. Indeed it could even be dimly foreseen in the 1950s. What is happening in Britain is not the death of Toryism, which will only come about with the death of human nature. It is the death of socialism. That, paradoxically, has released the energy which looks like producing a political landslide for Labour.

After the 1959 election, in which I had been the Conservative candidate for a safe Labour seat in Durham, I was asked to join my party's central policy committee, which had been set up to plan the Conservative manifesto for the following election. Ian Macleod was our chairman, the whole committee was kept very secret, with the agenda circulated in numbered double envelopes. A year or two into the 1959 Parliament, we had a dinner meeting with the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan. One of his themes in the discussion was that another Conservative victory would destroy the old Labour Party. Labour would be forced to recognise that there was no alternative but to abandon socialism, in the form of nationalisation, state control and attempted equality of outcome. Harold Macmillan was not afraid of social democracy; indeed his pre-war political book, *The Middle Way*, is virtually a social democratic tract.

The Conservatives did not win the 1964 election, and by then Hugh Gaitskell had died. That delayed the death of British socialism until the 1990s. The "Gang of Four", who deserve to be remembered with gratitude, tried to kill it in the 1980s, when they formed the breakaway Social Democratic Party in alliance with the Liberals. But the old Labour Party rejected them. Michael Foot was a left-wing Labour leader, but even Neil Kinnock and John Smith were still in some sense socialist, even though they were moving the Labour Party to the right. Margaret Thatcher's three election victories, and John

Major's election victory in 1992, which can now be seen to have had a momentous impact on the Labour Party, achieved what Harold Macmillan had hoped for in the early 1960s. The Labour Party had to accept that socialism was not electable; they made Tony Blair their leader and decided, in the Clause 4 vote, to abandon the commitment to state ownership.

In the meantime, socialism had failed spectacularly outside Britain. In the 1960s the rhetoric of the Soviet Union was still taken seriously.

When Khrushchev said he would bury the West by superior socialist economic growth, there were many people in Britain who thought he might be right; some feared it and at least a few hoped for it. The decline of the Soviet Union under Brezhnev and its break-up under Gorbachev and Yeltsin was accompanied by the repudiation of Marxist economic centralism in China. The ex-communist states of Eastern Europe were seen to have been ruined by their socialist experience.

Repeated electoral defeats for the Labour Party, combined with the total failure of the Marxist model in other countries, led to the election of Tony Blair, who has forced through a revolutionary rejection of his party's central doctrines. The social democratic idea has long influenced the Conservative Party, which is why new Labour and old Conservatives look so much alike. Not only Harold Macmillan, but the entire left-wing Conservative tradition down to Kenneth Clarke has been entirely compatible with social democratic ideas.

In terms of electoral calculation, a social democratic Labour Party was always likely to be a winner. Hugh Gaitskell thought so after his 1959 defeat. When *The Times* commissioned an opinion poll to gauge with just a fifth of the Conservatives, that shift would convert the 1992 vote to Conservatives 35 per cent, new Labour 48 per cent and Liberal Democrats 12 per cent. Such a shift would produce a landslide on the 1906 scale, and the current opinion polls show an even bigger Labour lead than that.

From the Tory point of view, this historic shift must be welcome, even if the price should be the defeat of the Conservative Party for one or two Parliaments. Socialism has been the enemy in a way that social democracy never can be. Socialism destroyed nations and damages those it did not destroy. Britain's deplorable economic performance between 1945 and 1979 was rooted in the socialism of Attlee's Government of 1945. It was an honourable Government but with disastrously wrong ideas: it built the post-war British economy on the model of state socialism, just as Nehru built the Indian economy, and with similarly disastrous results. Despite the relaxation of the socialist system under the Conservative Government from 1951 to 1964, Margaret Thatcher was the liberator. If her work has liberated even the Labour

William Rees-Mogg

Party from socialism, that is a triumph and not a disaster for the long-term interest of the country.

The shift of ideas in the Labour Party explains why the Conservatives are facing a massive defeat when they have not governed particularly badly: in this Parliament they have at worst made early mistakes and tried to recover from them. John Major's place in history will not be among the great prime ministers — he is not a Thatcher, a Churchill or a Lloyd George — but he will not be placed among the disasters either. He leaves the economy in sound condition. Most prime ministers have been in this middle group, and it is an honourable achievement. If John Major is now about to be turned out, the repudiation seems likely to be out of proportion to the failures of his performance.

A landslide will produce its own aftershocks. When Campbell-Bannerman was elected in 1905, shortly before the election, nobody could foresee either the achievements or the failures of the Liberal Government between then and 1914. It was certainly a Government of great men, including Asquith, Churchill and Lloyd George; its main achievement was the creation of the first welfare state. Tony Blair himself will not come to power with a national mandate for new policies, since he has been only too careful to minimise his policy commitments, but he does seem likely to come in with the big bang of an election landslide. That will in itself greatly impress people. There is no argument like a three-figure majority in the Commons.

There is one great drawback. Without Margaret Thatcher there would have been no new Labour; the progress has been from Thatcherism to social democracy. It ought to have been the other way round. Any realistic reader of the social democratic press — of *The Guardian*, *The Observer* or *The Mirror* — can see the built-in obsolescence of current social democratic ideas, but these flaws are being overlooked in new Labour and in Tony Blair. If we had gone through the experience of social democracy after the war, we would not be contemplating it now to solve our present problems. The glorious revolution that may be coming on May 1 will show that socialism is dead; it will also show that the British are only now climbing painfully into the world of the 1960s.

The best part of a lifetime
Muriel Spark
on her place in English letters

Your warm endorsement of this most important award, the David Cohen British Literature Prize, has made me very happy. The stated purpose of the award — "For a lifetime's achievement" — is one that appeals greatly to me, for I have indeed dedicated a lifetime to the art of letters and to perfecting it to the utmost of my talents and capacities.

It is exactly 70 years ago that, at the age of nine, I set forth upon my literary life. My first work, a poem, was an intended improvement on Robert Browning's *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. My elders and teachers were somewhat intrigued by this ruthless rewriting of the "Piper Pied" as I called him (so as to rhyme with "he cried"). And so, where angels feared to tread I continued to rush in with my improvements on many such examples of English literature, available in plenty as they were in the Edinburgh public libraries.

Eventually I settled down to producing original work of my own — poems and stories — and I have been at it ever since, with the result that I stand here this evening to thank you from the bottom of my heart for this great honour.

A few years ago I was called to the University of Aberdeen to receive an honorary degree. It was conferred on me by the then Chancellor, Sir Kenneth Alexander. After the ceremony he asked me, "Do you remember Miss Kissock?" With a little thought I did indeed remember kindly Miss Kissock, our first infant teacher at Gillespie's school, Edinburgh. Sir Kenneth, about my age, had shared those warm experiences with me when we were little more than toddlers — the play-boxes and the coloured plasticine. And there he was in his glittering robes and there I was in my scarlet gown. What does one do with the best part of a lifetime? I thought of the lines of Robert Louis Stevenson from *Keepake Mille*:

Honoured and old and all gaily apparelled,
Here we shall meet and remember the past.

I feel fortunate in having been born in a rich century for literature. It is the century that produced the ground-breaking *Waste Land* of T.S. Eliot and the spell-binding *A la recherche du temps perdu* of Marcel Proust. It is a century that stretches from Chekhov, Pirandello and Sciascia to Garcia Marquez from E.M. Forster, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf and Graham Greene to Milan Kundera, Iris Murdoch, Saul Bellow and John Updike. We have had critics of art and literature indispensable to civilisation — scholars of brilliance and wit such as Lytton Strachey, Herbert Read, Allen Tate, Lionel Trilling, and onward to Frank Kermode and Gabriel Josipovici; the more to enrich our powers of appreciation and discernment. The list is a long and dazzling one.

There is one great drawback. Without Margaret Thatcher there would have been no new Labour; the progress has been from Thatcherism to social democracy. It ought to have been the other way round. Any realistic reader of the social democratic press — of *The Guardian*, *The Observer* or *The Mirror* — can see the built-in obsolescence of current social democratic ideas, but these flaws are being overlooked in new Labour and in Tony Blair. If we had gone through the experience of social democracy after the war, we would not be contemplating it now to solve our present problems. The glorious revolution that may be coming on May 1 will show that socialism is dead; it will also show that the British are only now climbing painfully into the world of the 1960s.

What turn will literature take in the century to come? — drama? poetry? — A lot depends on the pathways opened by communication technology. Let's hope it will be inspiring in the field of creative writing as the development of printing methods in the West in the 15th century proved.

One thing I am persuaded of: the world of communications has to be fed by travel. Nothing can be done without it. Proust wrote: "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeking with new eyes." This is an ultimate truth never to be overlooked. But it has surely to be qualified by the likelihood that "new eyes" are very greatly stimulated by new faces, new sights and sounds. To me, travel is the life-blood of literature. We have to find at first hand how other people live and die, what they say, how they smell, how they are made. I recommend travel to young authors.

And also to authors not so young. So far, you have been too polite to ask me how I intend to use the handsome prize-money that goes with the British Literature Award. I can say right away that I intend it for my travels, starting with a lovely, new, suitable motor car, which I hope will bear me in and out of our famous tunnel with ever more ease and pleasure.

Thank you again, and again.

This is the Dame Muriel Spark's acceptance speech from last night's award ceremony in London. In addition to the prize, the Arts Council of England gave £10,000 to Gillespie's High School, Edinburgh, on which her novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* was based.

Cross to bear

THE SALE yesterday for £27,000 of a Victoria Cross awarded during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 has devastated an elderly widow, whose son virtually gave it away last November to pay off a loan.

George Forrest handed over the medal awarded to his great grandfather, Captain George Forrest, to repay a £4,000 personal loan. Ethel Forrest, 84, his mother, is broken by the sale.

"My son needed the money for his computer business," she says from her home in Oxford. "so he borrowed it from a man calling himself a broker. But after three months he could only repay £1,000, so he gave the man the medal. He didn't know how much it was worth and I was in hospital at the time. I would have found him the money if he really needed it."

Captain Forrest was awarded the VC as a 59-year-old officer in the Bengal Veteran Establishment. He and a small band of men were guarding the British Army's main ammunition store, the Delhi Magazine, when it was attacked by mutineers. Three VCs were won by

that, unjust as it may seem, the deal was entirely lawful. There is no chance of redress.

"Auctioneers have been coming up to try to persuade me to sell for years," says Mrs Forrest, a Yugoslav by birth. "It was the most treasured possession of my husband, who died ten years ago. The auctioneers told me I could get a replica. I don't want a replica. I want my medal back."

Frame-up

MICHAEL HOWARD would be well advised to avoid the Michael Parkin Gallery in Belgrave next month, when it hosts an exhibition of prison art. The inmates' work, which will hang alongside that of established artists, has been chosen by Sir Stephen Tumini.

Tumini is best known for his period as Inspector of Prisons, when he bated Howard mercilessly with



his criticisms of government policy, and his selection in "The Judge Hangs" exhibition includes the work of hard-timers such as Ray Scobie, who is serving a murder sentence in Nottingham. I understand that Tumini hopes to secure Scobie a place at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford on his release.

Death row

THE OXFORD and Cambridge crews limbering up for their annual bout between Putney and Mortlake at the end of the month are considering another competition which would make the Boat Race look like a paddle on the Serpentine.

Both teams have been invited to compete on the Amazon against the Brazilian Rowing Federation in a "friendly fixture". But hostile jungle conditions — freak rapids, piranhas and blood-sucking leeches — are expected. The Brazilian Rowing Federation is offering expenses, and both camps think it would be churlish to refuse.

Death row

WITH a knighthood under his belt, Paul McCartney feels perhaps that it is time to hand over the musical reins. His son James, 19, makes his debut appearance playing guitar on the ageing Beatle's new album, *Flaming Pie*.

Hitherto, the publicity-shy Mc

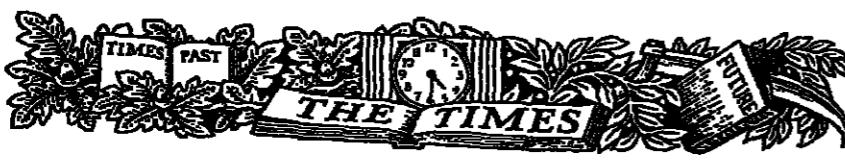
Cartney has made efforts to keep his children out of public view. On the other hand, he has often insisted on being accompanied by his wife Linda when performing on stage — even though Linda's performances have not always received critical acclaim.

The Beatles jettisoned early edits of *Hey Jude* with Linda on backing vocals, and when she started playing keyboards with McCartney's group Wings, coloured stickers were attached to the keys to help her along.

P.H.S.

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OPEN HOUSE

Major can and should publish the Downey report

The slide from stubbornness through bluster to defeat has too often marked this Government's weakest moments. From the former defence of the ERM to the abortive beef war, brave words have become like ash in ministerial mouths. Now, with his position on Sir Gordon Downey's "sleaze" report, the Prime Minister is in danger once again of making his stand on treacherous ground. In setting his face against publication he is defying not just the opposition parties and the Member with the most to lose, Neil Hamilton, he is acting wholly contrary to the public interest.

As we argued yesterday, and others have argued since, the voters whose support will be solicited by Mr Hamilton and others need to know if their candidate is a "liar and a cheat" or an honourable member. Sir Gordon was explicitly charged by the Prime Minister with delivering a judgment before the election. He has fulfilled his part of the bargain. If Sir Gordon's investigations are embargoed until after the election, this denies Mr Hamilton, his colleagues, and the voters the justice they deserve.

The publication of Sir Gordon's report is a matter for Parliament, not the Government. But it is as a result of the Prime Minister's decision that Parliament is denied the chance to permit publication. Because Parliament is prorogued tomorrow, the Standards and Privileges Committee cannot sit to consider Sir Gordon's report after that date. Sir Gordon's report will not be ready until next week. By that time the only place it can go is a Whitehall safe. The Speaker made it clear yesterday that the timetable had been set and she could do nothing. The Prime Minister, however, could.

COLD PEACE IN HELSINKI

Clinton must limit the damage of Nato expansion

East-West summits are less momentous occasions than they used to be. During the Cold War, expectations for world peace hung on a few carefully staged meetings when the leaders of the two superpowers bargained over their nuclear arsenals. Now they are routine. Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin have already met 11 times.

Today's meeting, however, has something of the old atmosphere. The venue, Helsinki, is redolent of the days when Russians and Americans chose neutral Nordic territory for their encounters; familiar themes are back on the agenda: arms control, nuclear weapons and the clash between Moscow and the Atlantic Alliance.

For both leaders, the stakes are higher than they have been for years. Both have been recently re-elected, and need to give firm personal direction to their new administrations. Mr Yeltsin, especially, will be under intense scrutiny to see whether he has fully regained his physical and political strength. He has just announced a bold reshuffle of his Government, promoting capable young reformers. He must now demonstrate equal dexterity in defending Russia's interests abroad. Mr Clinton, beset by a growing scandal over campaign funding, has an interest in reassessing some leadership over the Western world.

This summit will help to determine whether Russia and the West are really able to forge a new strategic relationship, or whether they will slip back to the old ways of mutual suspicion, acrimony and confrontation. The issue is Nato enlargement. This ill-judged policy has already stirred up atavistic antagonism across the spectrum of Russian opinion. It has now, belatedly, aroused the opposition of many Western military strategists and politicians, who are asking how they blundered into the proposal without proper debate or rationale.

There is no easy way back, however.

THE FIRST EUROPEANS

Etruscans, Basques and Islington man

Down the centuries, from Pompey the Great to Franco the Small, and from Madrid to the Parc des Princes, the Basques have been called many things. But until Jorge Alonso nobody had thought of calling them Etruscans. Señor Alonso's research, reported by our Madrid Correspondent, offers a new answer to one of the puzzling questions about the long climb of man from the other beasts.

Language is a defining characteristic of man. It both shapes and restricts the way he thinks, by reflecting primitive human concepts such as the collaboration of the hunt and the fireside. Language makes possible planning, organisation, memory and society. And Basque and Etruscan are both very ancient, very odd languages. They have no known structural or historical relationship to any other language. Linguistic jargon describes such solitary tongues as "isolates". Basque is the only surviving language of those spoken in southwest Europe before the Indo-European invasions. Etruscan was the language of Tuscany before it was swamped by the golden voice of ancient Rome and the twine of modern Islington.

Señor Alonso's previous work suggests that Basque and other prehistoric and mostly forgotten languages were brought to Europe from North Africa. He argues that tribal migrations were driven by pressure on land, war and change of climate in Africa. And the tribes brought their languages with them. Others think that languages spread by linguistic osmosis from man to man and settlement to settlement rather than by such

many promises have been given to would-be applicants, and much political capital invested in the preparations. At least three new members — Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic — now seem guaranteed admission at Nato's Madrid meeting in July.

What the Helsinki summit must do is to mitigate the damaging uncertainty that this new dividing line through Europe will cause. Western leaders say that the Russians have already accepted the fact of enlargement, and are now only holding out for better conditions. This is only partially true.

Russia will never fully endorse the movement of Nato's frontiers further east. It may reconcile itself to enlargement, knowing that it is powerless to insist otherwise. But Mr Clinton would be foolish to imagine Russian approval for a policy which will, at best, bring perpetual negotiation.

He should concentrate on securing a parallel Russia-Nato agreement. This is important in itself, and should not be linked to the enlargement process. Russia needs a degree of dignity and voice in the management of European security. Mr Clinton must offer Mr Yeltsin a genuine partnership while not giving him a veto over Nato policy-making.

The decision on enlargement, and the need to satisfy Russia after the decision, has left the West with a weak hand in dealing with Moscow. As a consequence, nothing can be held out in front of them as a deterrent against potentially bad diplomatic behaviour. Discussions between the guilty and the impotent are invariably unsatisfactory in both content and form.

Mr Clinton can, and probably will, make concessions of value in other areas — on full Russian membership of the G7 or in revision of the outdated Conventional Forces in Europe treaty. To get the package right, he will need to deploy all his political skills, personal charm and imaginative diplomacy to convince a sceptical Boris Yeltsin.

Power of the press

From Mr Roy Greenslade

Sir, Simon Jenkins ("It's the voters wot win it", March 19) rightly points out that two research studies into the possible effect of *The Sun* on the 1992 election result reached very different conclusions.

What he did not say is that both failed to offer genuine insights into the relationship between a newspaper's political bias and its readers' casting of votes because they restricted themselves to studying only the election campaign itself.

In passing, Mr Jenkins touched on the key point that companies spend millions of pounds a year advertising in papers in the knowledge that what people read certainly does influence them to buy.

If they can be persuaded to buy, then surely they can be persuaded to vote. However, no advertiser would be foolish enough to think a single hit is good enough to indoctrinate a would-be buyer. It is the drip-drip-drip of a lengthy campaign which works. The same is true of editorial content. Neil Kinnock and John Major were each vilified for five years in *The Sun*. The insults Mr Kinnock suffered in the final week were merely the *coup de grace*. Mr Major will get his next month.

Yours sincerely,
ROY GREENSLADE,
5 Arundel Terrace,
Brighton, East Sussex.
March 19.

TV debate

From Mr Aubrey Thomas

Sir, A television confrontation between the leaders of the Conservative and Labour parties and your front-page headline today, "Major and Blair hit campaign trail", suggest we are heading for an American-style presidential election. This is nothing like the traditional British election between parties with their different ideas and aspirations.

Electors who vote for personalities should remember that in the next five-year parliamentary term, the Conservative and Labour parties can reject their leaders without any reference to the electorate.

Yours faithfully,
AUBREY THOMAS,
5 Birdham Close, Bickley, Kent.
March 18.

From Mr Adam Ward

Sir, The prospect of a televised debate between party leaders marks another stage in the progress of personality politics and should be resisted. We may expect attention to be focused further on participants' ties, suits and hairstyles — at the expense of any real examination of their policies.

Yours sincerely,
A. P. WARD,
99 Merton Avenue,
Great Lane, Coventry, Warwickshire.
March 17.

From Mr James Aronit

Sir, Taking everything into account, I think that I would prefer to spend the next six weeks in Albania.

Yours desirably,
JAMES ARONIT,
30 Bunbury Way,
Epsom Downs, Surrey.
March 18.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Regulators' view on windfall tax

From Dr Keith Hampson, MP for Leeds North West (Conservative)

Sir, As a member of the committee, I must repudiate Gordon Brown's claim that the report on energy regulation by the House of Commons Select Committee on Trade and Industry backs his case for a windfall profits tax (report, March 19).

We found that at the start of privatisation, shareholders in the regional electricity companies did disproportionately well, but that shareholders' prospects have varied since then and in the gas industry they have not been particularly good. We also said that "we find it hard to see how it would have been possible, prior to flotation, to have accurately estimated likely efficiency gains".

The regulators reacted to their under-performance by adjusting their subsequent price reviews to benefit customers. Britain now has the cheapest industrial gas and electricity in Europe and domestic consumers have seen electricity prices fall by 15 per cent and gas prices fall by 24 per cent.

Our conclusion was to commend the retention of the present system of regulation because it is designed to encourage efficiency savings. Companies first strive to increase profits and thereafter the regulators pass on the benefit to customers through periodic price reviews.

In giving evidence to the committee, Professor Littlechild, the electricity regulator, argued that by adjusting his price controls he had "dealt" with the windfall of the early period. Moreover, he indicated that in all likelihood the companies would seek to pass on any windfall tax to their customers.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH HAMPSON,
House of Commons.
March 19.

Israel's hard line on settlements

From Mr Anthony Rubin

Sir, Like Mr A. J. Cotton (letter, March 17) I too live in Israel for 12 years and, like his son and daughter, I served in the Israeli defence forces. I am still an Israeli citizen. Why should I not state publicly in Britain what I and the majority of Israelis state publicly in Israel, namely that provocative acts should cease and governments should follow the Oslo accords wholeheartedly and generously.

If my public statements in Britain were able to influence and lead to the overthrow of the present Government, so that Israel could revert to the Rabin/Peres track for peace, I would have done a great deal for the State of Israel.

Even in England I can assure Mr Cotton that I can understand complex issues and be well informed. You don't have to stand in Jerusalem to realise that building now in the east of the city is likely to jeopardise the peace process and provoke the violence which this Israeli Government can use to justify further infringement.

It is a cynical policy and can itself lead to the destruction of the State. I will say publicly that I am against it, wherever I happen to be. I happen to be a "candid friend" of Israel, not this Israeli Government.

Yours,
ANTHONY RUBIN,
Wicker House,
Wicker Lane, Hale Barns, Cheshire.
From Sir Cyril Townsend, MP for Berleyhead (Conservative)

Sir, Nick Oulton (letter, March 11) asks why "it is seemingly not accept-

able" for Prince Charles to visit Israel.

Perhaps part of the answer is that Israel since its creation has failed to live within internationally recognised borders, and continues to occupy by force of arms large chunks of territory belonging to its neighbours.

Yours faithfully,
CYRIL TOWNSEND,
House of Commons.
March 12.

From Mr Jeremy Montagu

Sir, People who refer to the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967 as an illegal occupation by conquest frequently seem to regard its forcible division by conquest by the Jordanian Army in 1948 as part of the natural course of events and its result as the status quo.

Jerusalem was one city from antiquity until 1948. It passed, yes, by conquest, through various hands, beginning with King David and continuing with Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, Arabs again, Turks, and finally Allenby, but always as one city, with many peoples living, mostly within discrete quarters. Only in 1948 was it divided and this pattern disrupted. Nineteen years later it was reunited, and so it remains today, once again one city with many peoples living, mostly in discrete quarters.

Is it that so brief a period of 19 years is accepted as the norm?

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
JEREMY MONTAGU,
171 Ifley Road, Oxford.
March 14.

Police buggering

From Dr C. N. M. Pounder

Sir, In your report today of Alison Halford's claim before the European Court of Human Rights that her telephones were illegally bugged on a warrant of the Home Secretary, you quote a Home Office explanation that "eavesdropping by the Merseyside Police on their own telephone system was outside the scope of the [Interception of Communications] Act and would not require a warrant".

The UK Government is a signatory to the Council of Europe recommendation R(95)4 which concerns "the protection of personal data in the area of telecommunication services with particular reference to telephone services". This provides protection to users of telecommunications systems and lays down rules with regard to

"use of listening or tapping devices" by "public authorities".

Paragraph 2.4 of this recommendation states that such action must be carried out only when this is provided for by law and constitutes a necessary measure in a democratic society in the interests of:

a. protecting state security, public safety, the monetary interest of the state or the suppression of criminal offences;

b. protecting the data subject [ie, the individual to whom the data relates] or the rights and freedoms of others.

It is interesting to speculate whether these criteria apply in Ms Halford's case.

Yours sincerely,
C. N. M. POUNDER
(Co-editor),
Data Protection News,
Cap Gemini UK,
95 Wandsworth Road, SW8.
March 18.

Love of the land

From Mr R. P. Voelcker

Sir, Sir John Acland (letter, March 15) implies that small farmers are good conservationists while large farmers are not. In a sense this is true, but it is mainly conservation by default, as small farms tend to occur where the land is unsuitable for arable cropping.

It is nonsense for Sir John to suggest that "vast areas of the countryside have been wrecked". Much of it is different from a century ago, as the needs of a much increased population, and war, have necessitated efficient arable cropping, but the only "greed" is that of the public for cheap food.

There could have been many more areas opened up solely for arable but many arable farmers enjoy country sports and are prepared to spend much of their profits in planting and

maintaining woods and hedgerows for foxes and pheasants.

The worst thing that can happen to the preservation of the countryside as we know it — and it is still very beautiful — would be a ban on hunting and shooting. The environment necessary for foxes and pheasants is exactly the same as is needed by many other birds and most mammals.

If hunting is banned there would be nothing to stop most farmers from attempting to exterminate the fox. Spinneys, coverts and woodland would be cut down. Then there really would be a bare arable plain for the critics to complain about.

Yours faithfully,
R. P. VOELCKER,
Avils Farm,
Lower Stanton St Quintin,
Nr Chippenham, Wiltshire.
March 17.

Spain and Gibraltar

From the Ambassador of Spain

Sir, Your report (March 7) on schoolchildren travelling on a collective passport from Gibraltar who were denied entry to Spain diverges from the facts.

Spain recognises the Gibraltaritans' right to circulate freely within the territory of the EU in strict accordance with Community rules, and will continue to do so. Consequently your correspondent's reference to a Spanish promise to "respect the validity of all travel documents issued in Gibraltar" is not accurate.

Spain does not refuse to acknowledge collective passports. What Spain

does not accept, and never will, is a document which states "Gibraltar" as the "Country of issue". Gibraltar is not a country. This is the only reason why the document was not accepted.

On November 30, 1996, another collective passport issued on identical terms was equally rejected. Your report mentions the British Embassy in Madrid's statement suggesting that children were used "to pursue political aims". If anyone is in a position to make such a suggestion, it would have to be my Government.

Yours sincerely,
ALBERTO AZA,
Spanish Embassy,
24 Belgrave Square, SW1.
March 17.

Doctors who drink

From Dr Robert Lefever

Sir, In response to concerns expressed over a doctor remaining in work despite his heavy drinking, (report, March 6) a judge has recommended that doctors should have compulsory two-yearly health checks.

This is an excellent suggestion but it presupposes that doctors know how to diagnose the early stages of alcoholism, rather than the terminal phase, and that they would be prepared to express concern about "colleagues" behaviour. This is something that tends not to happen while alcoholism is still generally perceived as a disgrace, or a product of weak will, rather than as an illness for which the sufferer can be given help.

Health checks are fine but they depend upon understanding in those doctors who perform them. The primary need is for advances in medical education on this subject.

Sincerely,
ROBERT LEFEVER,
2a Pelham Street, SW7.
March 17.

From Mr Andrew Porter

Sir, If Enoch Soames, on his centenary visit to the Reading Room, consults the fifth edition of *Grove's Dictionary* (1954), he'll find he was not quite forgotten.

Federico Mompou's early piano pieces, he'll read, "suggest the lovely lines of Iberian song and traces of old sounds, blown from a ruined flute, mingled with a noise of symbols roared with rust".



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 19: His Excellency Mr John Boag was received in audience by The Queen and presented the Letters of Recall of his predecessor and his own Letters of Commission as High Commissioner for the Republic of the Gambia in London.

Mr Boag was also received by Her Majesty.

Sir John Coles (Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) was present.

His Excellency Sir Muri Shrestha and Mrs Shrestha were received in farewell audience by The Queen and took leave upon His Excellency's relinquishing his appointment as Ambassador from the Kingdom of Nepal to the Court of St James's.

Her Majesty held a Council at 10.30 a.m.

There were present: The Rt Hon Anthony Newton MP (Lord President), the Baroness Chalker of Wallasey (Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office), the Rt Hon Sir Patrick Mayhew MP (Secretary of State for Northern Ireland), the Rt Hon Frank Field MP (Chancellor of the Exchequer), and the Rt Hon David Curry MP (Minister of State, Department of the Environment).

Mr Nigel Nichols was in attendance as Clerk of the Council.

At the Council The Queen pricked the List of Royal Sheriffs for the County of England (of which Cornwall and the Duchy of Lancaster).

The Rt Hon Anthony Newton MP had an audience of Her Majesty before the Council.

After the Council, the Rt Hon Frank Field MP had an audience of The Queen when Her Majesty pricked the List of Royal Sheriffs for the County of England (of which Cornwall and the Duchy of Lancaster).

This afternoon The Queen, Patron, visited the Blue Cross Animals Hospital, Hugh Street, London SW1, in its centenary year, and was received by the Chairman of the Board of Governors (Dr Alastair Porter) and the Chief Executive (Mr Alan Kenward).

Her Majesty this evening dined at the Connaught Hotel, London W1, on the occasion of the Hotel's Centenary, and was received by the Chairman of the Savoy Group (Sir Ewen Fergusson) and the Chairman of the Connaught Hotel (Sir Anthony Tuohy).

The Duke of Edinburgh, President Emeritus, World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF International, this morning left Anchorage, Alaska, to fly to Canada.

His Royal Highness this afternoon arrived in Calgary, Alberta, and gave

a Press Conference at the Palliser Hotel.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Founder and Chairman of the International Trustees, afterwards presented certificates to young people who have reached the Gold Standard at The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Young Canadians Challenge.

His Royal Highness this evening attended a Dinner for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Young Canadians and Challengers at the Bow Valley Club, Calgary.

March 19: The Princess Royal, Patron, The Butler Trust, today presented the Annual Awards at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London SW7.

Her Royal Highness, President, The Princess Royal Trust for Care, this afternoon attended a trustees meeting at the BT Centre, Newcastle Street, London EC1.

The Princess Royal, Commandant in Chief, St John Ambulance and Nursing Service, this evening attended a Reception at Buckingham Palace.

CLARENCE HOUSE
March 19: Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother this afternoon received the Presidents of Queen Mary's Clothing Guild at St James's Palace on the occasion of the Guild's Annual General Meeting.

The Hon Mrs Rhodes was in attendance.

KENSINGTON PALACE
March 19: The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, SeeAbility, today visited the Headquarters, 56-66 Highlands Road, Leatherhead. Afterwards Her Royal Highness, Patron, St John's School, visited the School, Epsom Road, Leatherhead, Surrey.

March 19: The Duke of Kent this evening presented the Montblanc Award for patronage of the arts to Sir George Christie, at the National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE
March 19: Princess Alexandra, accompanied by the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy, this afternoon undertook an engagement at Bents.

Her Royal Highness visited Arcaida, a home for the Bermuda Mental Health Foundation, and later visited Stone Hall, a residential care facility run by Fair Havens Christian Care Association.

Princess Alexandra, Vice-President of the British Red Cross, accompanied by the Rt Hon Sir Angus Ogilvy, this evening attended a Reception and dinner at Bents. Red Cross gift to the Governor (HE) the Rt Hon the Lord Waddington at Government House, Hamilton.

The Duke of Edinburgh, President Emeritus, World Wide Fund for Nature - WWF International, this morning left Anchorage, Alaska, to fly to Canada.

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£9,000 masterpiece is now worth millions

Restoration reveals hidden details

BY DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

ONE of the greatest masterpieces by Veronese, the 16th-century Italian painter, has returned to the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital after a year-long restoration programme in which X-rays revealed dramatic changes to its composition. The removal of dark and yellowed glazing has uncovered radiant colours and details that had been lost for decades.

Robert Coote, a leading Veronese scholar based at the University of East Anglia, expressed excitement at discovering that the figure of Christ in *The Resurrection* - a massive nine by five ft painting - had been reversed.

Veronese (c. 1528-88), a master of light and colour who specialised in biblical and historical subjects and who was inspired by Titian, decided to vary the pose. In doing so, he had moved away from an earlier version of the subject, which he painted for San Francesco della Vigna in Venice.

Dr Coote said that the restoration had revealed a whole range of colours in the tradition of Titian and Bellini that had been completely concealed by dark glazes. Details such as a pair of sandals belonging to one of the sleeping soldiers are seen clearly for the first time: "The colours work in terms of the narrative, so you're aware of the visionary figure of Christ."

The hospital bought the painting in 1950 for a mere £9,000. Estimating its multi-



The Rev Bernard Hughes, senior hospital chaplain, looks at parts of the painting that were hidden

million value today is difficult, Dr Coote said. "There has not been a comparable picture on the market."

The painting was removed from the chapel in 1995, for an exhibition at the National Gallery in Athens, the first time it had left England since Sir James Wright, a wealthy traveller of the day, acquired it in Venice in 1767.

Susan Loprett, director of the Chelsea and Westminster

Hospital Arts Project, explained that in 1950, the hospital chaplain, the Rev Christopher Hildyard, had wandered down Bond Street, in search of something to place over the altar. Having found the Veronese at Colnaghi's, he persuaded the trustees to agree that, if he raised £2,000 by public subscription, they would raise the rest. The picture will be unveiled on Monday.

Birthdays today

Professor Sir William Ascher, former Principal, St George's Hospital Medical School, 60; the Very Rev William Baddeley, former Area Dean of Westminster, 83; Dr Wendy Ballantyne, former Collector of Mr Christopher Beaumont, horsebox trainer, 68; Mr Anthony Blond, publisher, 69; Mr T.G.M. Brooks, Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire, 68; Sir Arnold Burgen, FRS, former Master, Darwin College, Cambridge, 75; Sir Stuart Burgess, chairman, Anglia and Oxford Health Authority, 68; the Right Rev M.J. Conn, Bishop of Aberdeen, 63; Mr Charles Elly, former president, Law Society, 70; Dr Michael French, 53; Dr Ian J. Grindley-Drury, Printcircular and Vice-Chancellor, University of Bristol, 60; Mr William Hurt, actor, 47.

Mr Spike Lee, film director and producer, 40; Dame Vera Lynn, singer, 80; Mr A.M. B'Fow, former Head Master, Westminster School, 66; Mr Sviatoslav Richter, pianist, 82; Lord Justice Saville, 76; Sir David Montgomery, Lord-Lieutenant of Perth and Kinross, 68; Mr Brian Phillips, former Captain of the Royal Mint, 70; Mr Philip Oppenheim, MP, 41; Dr John Raco, former Head Master, Westminster School, 66; Mr Harry Solomon, former chairman, Hillsdown Holdings, 60; Mr Tim Yeo, MP, 52.

The Princess Royal will attend the Royal College of Music, Prince Consort Road, South Kensington, at 2.45. The Prince of Wales will visit the Wolverhampton Express and Star, Queen Street, at 11.20, and present a present on behalf of the Trust of Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club, Molineux Stadium, at 12.30; will attend "Tomorrow's World Live" at the NEC, Birmingham, at 2.05; and as President, The Prince's Trust, will attend the Royal Charity Premiere of *Star Wars* at the Odeon, Leicester Square, at 8.00.

The Princess Royal will attend the Royal College of Public Health Medicine spring meeting and deliver a lecture to mark the 35th anniversary at the Royal College of Physicians at 5.20.

Princess Margaret will attend a reception at the Imperial War Museum at 7.15 to mark the eightieth birthday of Dame Vera Lynn and view the Forces Fashion and the New Look exhibition.

The Duke of Gloucester, President, British Consultants Bureau, will attend a dinner at the Royal Thames Yacht Club, Knightsbridge, at 7.45.

The Duke of Kent, as Vice-Chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board, will visit United Kingdom Glass Eels,

Buckinghamshire Lieutenant, The Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Sir Nigel Mohrs, was the host at a dinner held last night at Hampden House, Great Hampden, for the Buckinghamshire Lieutenants to dine out with Mr John Paterson as Vice Lord-Lieutenant and to welcome Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher as the new Vice Lord-Lieutenant.

The Marquis of Huntly

The Marquis of Huntly last night entertained members and guests at the Institute of Commercial Management's Annual Dinner in the House of Lords. The guests included:

Professor Derek Gladwell, OBE, and Mr Gladwell; Professor Alan Shulman, former professor of marketing, CBE, and Mrs McIntyre.

Professor Thomas Garavan, Professor and Mrs Richard Condon, and Mr and Mrs Michael Rimmington. Dr Pamela and Dr Robinson, Dr Robert Schmitz and Dr Mrs Louise Mullen.

Mr Robert Schmitz and Dr Mrs Louise Mullen.

Royal College of Anaesthetists

Mr Stephen Dorell, former Secretary of State for Health, and Mr Gerald Malone, Minister for Health, attended the annual dinner of the Royal College of Anaesthetists held last night at the Midland Hotel, Birmingham.

Professor Derek Gladwell, OBE, and Mrs McIntyre, former chairman, Royal College of Anaesthetists, and Dr Michael Rimmington, Dr Pamela and Dr Robinson, Dr Robert Schmitz and Dr Mrs Louise Mullen.

Lecture and the president presented Dr S.M. Lyons with the College Medal and Dr D.J. Greaves with the Fellowship *ad eundem*.

United Cecil Club

Sir Sydney Chapman, MP, was the host at a dinner of the United & Cecil Club held last night at the House of Commons. Sir Marcus Fox, MP, chairman, presided. Mr Robert Worcester was the principal speaker and Mr Christopher Fenwick also spoke.

Justices' Clerks' Society

Mr Laurence Conn, President of the Justices' Clerks' Society, was the host at the annual dinner held last night at Gray's Inn.

The principal guests were the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice,

the Master of the Rolls, the Attorney-General, the Home Secretary, Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, Mrs Justice Arden.

Service dinner

Inns of Court & City Yeomanry

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NEWS

Blair attack over sleaze report

■ Tony Blair last night led an unprecedented move to prevent Parliament from rising tomorrow for the general election in an attempt to force publication of the report on the cash-for-questions affair.

He was joined by Paddy Ashdown, other minority leaders and the entire Shadow Cabinet in calling for the session to be extended amid claims that the Government had timed the prorogation to avoid publication of the report until after the election. The report will be ready next week. Even the Queen was embroiled in the dispute.....Page 1

Leading ladies meet for lunch

■ Political animosity was off the menu as Britain's leading ladies met for lunch. Norma Major and Cherie Blair united briefly to present awards for courage and bravery.....Page 1

Unqualified praise

The top award in British architecture has been given to a man with no professional qualifications in a move that will bring new hope to thousands of designers and technicians.....Page 1

SAS rescue

A British aid worker described how he was rescued by the SAS from southern Albania and flown to safety.....Page 1

Doctor jailed

A doctor faces being struck off the Medical Register after being jailed for three months for indecently assaulting a nurse. Manchester Crown Court heard that he often engaged in sexual banter.....Page 3

Off the rails

The new owners of Regional Railways North East have fallen foul of their local Passenger Transport Authority after cancelling 49 trains in one day.....Page 5

Patient heal thyself

A campaign to encourage patients to look after their own health over Easter so family doctors can have a holiday was announced by the British Medical Association.....Page 4

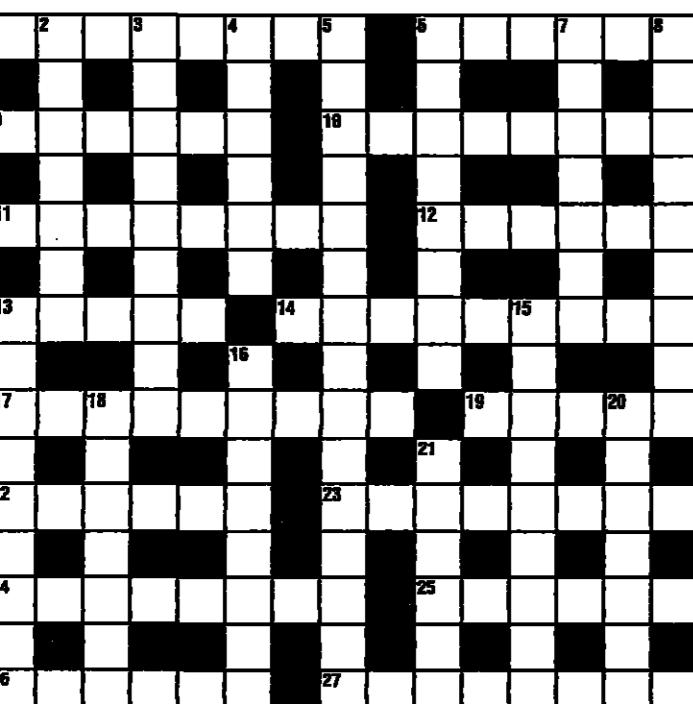
Blots on landscape

A campaign against disfigurement of the countryside was launched with an attack on road signs, rural architecture and mobile phone masts.....Page 8

Princess lookalike abdicates

■ A woman who has made a career out of being a Diana, Princess of Wales, lookalike is to retire after ten years because of the strain. Christina Hance, 36, who has earned up to £5,000 a day, says she can no longer cope and has found herself suffering similar problems to her alter ego. "Being Diana sent me mad and made me very ill," she said.....Page 9

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,432



ACROSS
1 Squirrel shot by brother according to rumour (8).
6 Backward children make a mistake (4,2).
9 Laugh from heartless twit in a row (6).
10 English Lord arranged a party in a fabulous location (2,6).
11 Toxic metal, as opposed to tin, abandoned by English (8).
12 Spirit of optimism of fellow pocketing gold (6).
13 Firm providing possible place on board for director (5).
14 Shined with rub, possibly (9).
15 European city offers author enduring repose (9).
19 Name set in entrance may indicate philanthropist (5).
22 Drive into cactus region with scant vegetation (6).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,431

NIGHTMARCHMAN
I E U V O O O Q
T R E E N A I L S P E R D U
R S I A L E T I
O C E A N T R O T C H I C
G G O M O E K
L U C I F E R S A L E R N O
Y O O E L N
C A M B R I C ANALYST
E M K H N G H
R O C K B E R G T N A N E
I D M E S O N I D
N O O S E T A I L O D E R
E R H A A U E A
A E L E P H A N T S H R E W

15 Jackson's contribution to rural architecture (9).
16 It's a tree that's pulped to make paper (8).
18 Beast delving into tins for bits to eat (7).
20 Go too far with maiden, perhaps, then sharper (7).
21 A policeman's following street prints (6).

Times Two Crossword, page 56



Flag day: Russian and American flags on sale in Helsinki for today's summit between Presidents Yeltsin and Clinton Page 14

BUSINESS

Jobless down: Unemployment fell 68,200 to 1.74 million in February, or 6.2 per cent of the workforce. Average earnings increased by five per cent.....Page 29

Higher sales: High street sales were stronger than expected in February, reviving speculation that an incoming Chancellor will be forced to raise rates.....Page 29

Telephone bid: Talk of Cable & Wireless bid for Sprint, America's third largest telephone group, delayed the opening of the US company's shares in New York.....Page 29

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 24.6 points to 432.2. The pound rose 1.08 cents to \$1.5968 and 2.07 pence to DM2.6850, lifting the sterling index to 96.3 from 95.7.....Page 32

Racing: Only 54 horses were left in the Grand National at the second forfeit stage, raising fears that the race will again fall short of a 40-runner maximum field.....Page 53

SPORT

Football: The second leg of the Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final against SK Brann of Bergen and the next six weeks of the domestic season will show what Roy Evans' Liverpool are made of.....Page 56

Golf: European tournament professionals are to be balloted over the composition of the team which will face the United States in the Ryder Cup.....Page 50

Cricket: The entire Sussex committee resigned an hour into the annual meeting at the Grand Hotel, Brighton.....Page 56

Racing: Only 54 horses were left in the Grand National at the second forfeit stage, raising fears that the race will again fall short of a 40-runner maximum field.....Page 45

Disappointing evening: Hans Werner Henze's 1960s opera *Elegy for Young Lovers* fails to impress in Birmingham.....Page 45

ARTS

Tribute to Wilde: Simon Callow reveals his versatility as an actor in his fine West End revival of Michael MacLiamoir's tribute to Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Oscar*.....Page 43

The force lives: George Lucas's 1977 science fiction classic *Star Wars* returns to the big screen in a new edition topped up with even more special effects.....Page 44

New on video: Nature goes on the rampage in the Hollywood special effects blockbuster *Twister*, while the 1950 John Huston crime classic *The Asphalt Jungle* is also released.....Page 45

Week of chic: Iain R. Webb enjoys the moments of greatness during Paris Fashion Week as Alexander McQueen shocks at Givenchy and Valentino adds a tough edge to glamour.....Page 20, 21

Cancer hope: Dr Thomas Stuttaford on the Chinese tree of happiness that has revolutionised the life of an English cancer sufferer.....Page 22

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Vend speed: More than £1 billion is put into Britain's vending machines. A special report on this growing industry.....Page 37-41

THE PAPERS

Faced with the United States, cultural resistance must go hand in hand with the economic offensive. In Latin America, so far from God and so close to Washington, as the proverb says, Jacques Chirac must have been heard when he denounced the hegemony of the English language.....Page 22

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LOTTERY NUMBERS

13, 16, 17, 29, 40, 48. Bonus: 32.



TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

■ INTERVIEW Valerie Grove meets Professor Roy Foster, the author of a new biography of W.B. Yeats

■ EDUCATION

David Blunkett on Labour's plans for the Department for Education

FOCUS

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See the arrival of Captain Cook's Endeavour replica
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Jumping through hoops: skating's new star turns
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TODAY



THURSDAY MARCH 20 1997

Jobless rate declines to six-year low

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Government yesterday claimed Britain's economic record is now "excellent" after new figures showed a further fall, of 68,200, in the number of people out of work and claiming benefit to its lowest level since October 1990.

UK unemployment fell to 1,746,300, seasonally adjusted, or 6.2 per cent of the workforce, last month. The jobless rate among men is 8.5 per cent, and among women 5.3 per cent. Unemployment fell in all regions.

While claimant count unemployment is now at its lowest level since October 1990, the unemployment rate to its lowest level since November of the same year. It marks the 12th consecutive fall in unemployment.

ment and takes the drop over the past year to 466,000.

John Major said: "Falling unemployment, stable prices, lower taxes, higher living standards — people's hard work has created a turbo-economy, which is making life better right across the country. Only if we stick on this course can we be sure to make life better still."

The fall was the third largest on record and takes the overall decline in unemployment since its peak in December 1992 to 1,254,800.

Though Whitehall statisticians are reluctant to put forward any estimate of the rate of change in unemployment because of the impact of benefit changes, government ministers claimed that the trend is now higher than it was before the changes in benefit.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said that the figures were still being affected by the replacement of Unemployment Benefit by the Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA) as the principal benefit available to people out of work.

But they were unable to offer, as they normally do, any estimate of the trend in unemployment, insisting that the benefit changes made such estimates impossible, and suggested that they would be unlikely to do so before about mid-summer.

While they insisted they had not been asked by ministers to produce a new trend figure, they agreed that the rate of fall was now higher than it had been last year before the introduction of JSA.

Retail sales rose 0.5 per cent in February, according to the Office for National Statistics, against market expectations of a rise of around 0.1 per cent.

Minutes of the February monetary meeting, also published yesterday, show the Bank of England still wants a 0.25 per cent rate rise. But the Bank's stance had softened from previous meetings, at which Eddie George, the Governor, had called for a rise of as much as 0.5 per cent and Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, had resisted.

Retail sales growth was driven by a big increase in spending on household goods, with sales rising 2.1 per cent, and by a 1.4 per cent rise in sales of clothing and footwear. But food volumes, up strongly in recent months, were flat.

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But the incoming Chancellor can take heart from figures for the value of sales in February, which suggest High Street inflation is running at around 1 per cent, with retail competition yet fierce.

Strength of sales may spell rate rise

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

HIGH STREET sales were stronger than expected in February, reviving speculation that an incoming Chancellor will be forced to raise rates by as much as half a percentage point in May.

Retail sales rose 0.5 per cent in February, according to the Office for National Statistics, against market expectations of a rise of around 0.1 per cent.

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But the incoming Chancellor can take heart from figures for the value of sales in February, which suggest High Street inflation is running at around 1 per cent, with retail competition yet fierce.

The new figures are unlikely to have altered the Bank's view that a 0.25 per cent rise will be needed immediately. Mr George said in February's meeting that he believed current monetary and consumer spending growth is unsustainable. The risk, he said, is that the 2.5 per cent inflation target in two years' time will be missed.

However, he also said he did not believe that the economy was in danger of accelerating out of control. The Chancellor insisted that the economy was on target to meet the inflation target while emphasising the importance of the sustained rise in sterling and the weaker GDP figures.

Earnings growth increases to 5%

By OUR INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

GROWTH in average earnings has accelerated, suggesting that a more buoyant labour market is triggering higher pay settlements.

Average earnings increased by 5 per cent in the year to the January 31, an increase of 0.25 per cent on the December figure, which itself has been revised up by a quarter of a percentage point.

New figures from the Office for National Statistics showed a three-quarter point rise in underlying earnings growth across the whole economy since last month's figures were published.

The figures were much higher than expected and raised fears about inflationary pressures building up in the labour market. The earnings growth figure is now a full point higher than it was three months ago, when it stood at 4 per cent.

Ministers, eager yesterday

to proclaim the economic success of a further fall in unemployment, insisted that this was not a principal cause for concern, given rising pay settlements.

Manufacturing output per head was 1.4 per cent higher in the three months to January compared with a year earlier, and is now running at its highest level since August 1995.

As a result, unit wage costs are still easing, with manufacturing wages and salaries per unit of output now 3.1 per cent higher in the three months to January compared with a year ago — the lowest figure since August 1995.

Analysis suggested that the rapidly tumbling level of unemployment in the last three months, spurred by the introduction of the Jobseekers' Allowance, had now got to such a pace that it was allowing earnings growth to accelerate.

SFO 'held papers in Forsyth case'

By JON ASHWORTH

THE Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has become embroiled in a fresh dispute over Elizabeth Forsyth, whose conviction was quashed by the Court of Appeal this week.

Lawyers for Mrs Forsyth, a former aide to Polly Peck's Asil Nadir, claim that vital documents were kept from the defence throughout her trial and did not come to light until the appeal hearing in January.

The SFO says the documents were available for inspection throughout.

Any suggestion that documents were suppressed would be highly damaging to the SFO, which is privately examining the outcome of the appeal. Mrs Forsyth served ten months of a five-year sentence for handling £400,000 in stolen funds, but her conviction was ruled to be unsafe. She is seeking compensation for wrongful imprisonment.

The latest row relates to

witness statements made in 1991 by Dennis Robertson, the Stoy Hayward partner who was Polly Peck's auditor. Mr Robertson died before the Forsyth case came to court, but his testimony casts light on a key part of the defence — the so-called "secondary banking" operation in northern Cyprus.

Peter Krivinskas, the lawyer who acts for both Mrs Forsyth and Mr Nadir, says he did not know the documents existed until the appeal opened in January. He said: "The ramifications are extreme. If the evidence had been read out in court, it may well have resulted in a not guilty verdict."

The SFO would not comment yesterday. The SFO faces a dilemma over Mr Nadir, who is expected to apply for the case against him to be dropped on grounds of abuse of process.

Rexam's revamp costs 1,200 jobs

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

REXAM, the packaging group formerly known as Bowater, yesterday announced the loss of 1,200 jobs, including 500 in Britain, across its European and North American operations.

The restructuring of continuing operations, together with the sale of a large number of non-core businesses, gave rise to a £260 million charge, leaving Rexam with pre-tax losses £100 million in 1996. In 1995 Rexam earned pre-tax profits of £180 million.

The company has written off £254 million in goodwill and £104 million has been lost through disposals. Rexam's

director, said that restructuring of the group would deliver annual cost savings of £20 million. The series of disposals, which began in January, would be completed by next year, he said.

The sell-off and restructuring followed the appointment last July of Rolf Borjesson as chief executive. So far, three businesses have been sold, with a further sale half completed, and four or five sales are at advanced stages of negotiation.

An 8p final dividend makes an unchanged total of 14.1p.



Pennington, page 31
Market report, page 32

Borjesson: sell-offs

Michael Hartnett, finance

Tempus, page 52



Ramon Pajares, managing director of Savoy Hotel, anticipates an improvement in occupancy and room rates. Story, page 30

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKETS INDEXES

FTSE 100 4332.2 (-24.6)

FTSE All share 2115.4 (-10.16)

New York 18493.71 (+8.51)

Dow Jones 6830.09 (-86.47)

S&P Composite 780.31 (-8.35)

US RATE

Federal Funds 5.75% (5.75%)

Long Bond 8.51% (8.51%)

Yield 8.50% (8.50%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank 6% (6%)

12-month gilt future (Jun) 105% (110%)

STERLING

New York 1.5880* (1.5807)

London 1.5973 (1.5880)

S 2.6858 (2.6857)

DM 9.0581 (9.0587)

FF 2.2422 (2.2422)

Yen 125.05 (124.82)

E Index 96.3 (95.7)

JPY 120.30 (120.30)

HKD 7.75 (7.75)

SGD 1.5735 (1.5735)

MXN 1.4070* (1.4070)

MXN 122.00* (122.00)

Yen 104.1 (104.1)

Tokyo close Yen 122.00

Brent 15-day (Jun) \$22.30 (22.10)

London close \$348.35 (\$348.35)

* denotes midday trading price

B&B benefit

Bradford & Bingley, the building society, has promised to double its members' benefits scheme to £100 million this year in its battle against converting societies.

Page 30

Looking east

Kingfisher, the retail conglomerate that owns Woolworths, Comet and Superdrug, plans to open two branches of its B&Q do-it-yourself chain in Taiwan. Page 31, Tempus 32

strong enough balance sheet to afford the massive price and with all its restructuring, its management has too much on its plate."

With a market value of nearly \$19 billion, Sprint is larger than C&W. A C&W spokesman said that the company would not comment on market speculation.

Many observers believe that a complex deal could emerge

from further discussions.

C&W may want to counter the \$2 billion merger between BT and MCI, while Sprint is looking for greater international business.

□ The French Government will begin the privatisation of France Telecom on May 6, with the sale of shares worth between F130 billion and F150 billion, Michel Bon, the chairman, said yesterday.

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□ Calling the shots on the Co-op □ City cools to Vickers □ Positive picture from the retail sales figures

□ THE Salvation Army has hired Attila the Hun. The men at the top of the Co-operative movement must feel they need all the help they can get against Lanica Trust, if they are prepared to employ one of the City's toughest corporate financiers.

Brian Keelan of SBC Warburg has made his name on the aggressive side of City takeover bids, but he is therefore a good defender by definition and should be able to extract the best price for the Co-op. Except for one huge reservation, which is that there is no bid on the table for the Co-op or bits of it from Lanica, Andrew Regan's investment vehicle, or its 90 per cent-owned associate Galileo, and the Co-op has made it clear any offer will not be considered.

Received wisdom, therefore, has Mr Regan as a Don Quixote tilting at windmills that are firmly anchored to the ground. One day he will have to admit, in public, that the deal cannot be done. Lanica's shares, which motored to close to £20 before their suspension on froth and speculation, will start to trade again, and collapse. SBC will pocket one of the least earned defence fees in history.

Except for another huge reservation, which is that you don't hire a defender if you are not under attack. Let us therefore assume an attack is possible, and

consider how. Mr Regan starts with a decent advantage, access to big City hitters for capital. He is reckoned to have £1.5 billion to his hand, potential.

His disadvantage is an air of someone who went into a deep freeze around 1988 and has just been defrosted for the purpose, the mutant son of Gordon Gekko. This may be unfair but it is the image, which is why sectors of the Labour Party are not keen to hand the Co-op movement over to him.

His other disadvantage is the weird nature of the Co-op. The parallel has been drawn with a mutual, following the Scottish Amicable's discovery of how nasty it can be in the real world, but this is incorrect. It is more like an old-fashioned trade union. The members own the Co-op, and derive scant satisfaction from this, but they do not have direct control. This, broadly, is delegated upwards through committees of mandated Co-op members to the board at the top, and executives appointed by those mandated members.

This hermetically sealed structure stops any direct appeal to

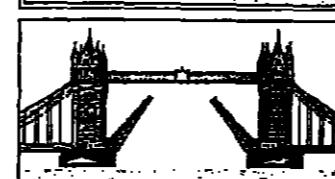
members. All Lanica/Galileo can do is try to rouse them to put pressure on their delegates. These in turn put pressure on the board and executives, who are currently proving obdurate. Think of it as a management buy-in by Mr Regan, who would want ownership of some or all of the assets. In return he would offer members a better return on their membership.

Put this way, it still looks extremely difficult but not impossible. The heavy odds must still be on Lanica shares crashing on re-listing and a contrite admission of failure, but those odds are very hard to call.

Tanks for all your patience

□ VICKERS is one of those dull companies to which something interesting must eventually happen. Unfair, certainly, to one of our most distinguished exporters, but something has been about to happen to the walnut dashboards of its Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars or the armoured shells of its tanks for

PENNINGTON



so long that City speculators at least are running out of patience.

Hard to believe it is a difficult business making and selling Rollers, but while sales are tooling along nicely as the "feel-good" factor filters through, margins are under pressure, and hence a 10 per cent fall in operating profits from car.

Having survived the nightmare days of 1991 and 1992, Vickers is determined to see its luxury car division properly restored to glory, gleaming upholstery and a convincing financial performance. Those analysts downgrading profits yesterday are less easily not convinced that such determined loyalty to fancy motors is worthwhile.

Vickers is equally firm about

its defence operation. Further consolidation in defence engineering is going to come, even if the need is not as pressing as in aerospace. Sir Colin Chandler, the chief executive of Vickers, must accept this, but would like it to happen on his terms and is playing down rumoured links with GKN, another of Britain's four armoured vehicle makers. Tanks outshoot armoured cars every time Vickers makes the former; GKN the latter — and Sir Colin would sooner call the shots than field them.

A large tank order from Turkey may help him, but it would not be the huge boost some observers hope for. Fortunes in defence will rather depend on a couple of awards from the army, for reconnaissance equipment and a combat engineer tractor. Whichever of the bidding consortia wins is likely to hold the keys to the shape of European defence engineering.

Analysts are generally gloomy about prospects for defence, fearing the effects of a future orders gap even if one looks somewhat nearer for GKN. Vickers shares now sell on less than 14 times' this year's earnings, but in the absence of positive developments market sentiment is likely to remain sour.

High street tills ring in the election

□ THE Governor of the Bank of England's monthly calls for higher interest rates have an increasingly ritualistic look about them. A quarter of a per cent is really neither here nor there, but Eddie George must keep on hammering away even if we all know a base rate rise as likely as a 100-seat Conservative majority thereafter.

He has pulled back from suggesting a half-point increase, which suggests even he accepts the ritual being played out. But set aside for a moment the earnings figures, which could be inflated by all those awful City bonuses, and there is enough ammunition in the February retail sales to suggest the Chancellor has right as well as political expediency in his side.

The catch is the mismatch

between the rise in the volume of sales in February, adjusted for inflation and ahead of City expectations, and the rise in the value of sales, unadjusted. The difference between these is the measure of inflation on the high street, and this is now running at just 1 per cent year on year.

Sales growth indicates a healthy economy, but inflation appears under control. This may be reading too much from a monthly take on figures that are notoriously erratic, but it does coincide with what we can all see happening in the real world. Consumers are spending, but wisely; we are all used to cheap prices and we are not going to accept sudden increases. Good news for whoever is Chancellor by the summer, even if political machismo may require a token rise in base rates then.

Zaire warning

□ STANDARD & Poor's, the risk consultant, has drawn up a list of the world's ten most dangerous currencies for speculators. The old Soviet Union does predictably badly, but the two worst? On level pegging, Albania and Zaire. Bet you feel safer for knowing that. Somehow the old advice to beware, the value of your investment can fall as well as rise, hardly seems to be enough here, does it?

Kingfisher to expand in Asia as profits jump

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

KINGFISHER, the retailing conglomerate, is joining the expansion of Britain's retailers abroad with plans to open two new branches of B&Q, the DIY market leader, in Taiwan.

Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy, chief executive, said that the openings would build up Kingfisher's understanding of the Asian market and could lead to openings there of its other formats — which include Woolworths, Comet and Superdrug — in the future. The decision to push on with

openings follows a successful trial in Taiwan of the first foreign branch of B&Q.

Sir Geoffrey was speaking as he unveiled better-than-expected full-year results for the group. Pre-tax profit in the 52 weeks to February 1 was 24.7 per cent higher at £388.7 million on turnover up 10.1 per cent to a record £5.82 billion.

Many analysts raised their forecasts for this year by between £5 million and £15 million to around £440 million.

Sir Geoffrey declined to

comment on repeated rumours linking Kingfisher with both Wickes, the troubled DIY chain, and Littlewoods, which is planning to sell its chain of 135 stores. He said the emphasis was on organic growth and in-fill acquisitions, but he did not rule out larger purchases.

Strongest growth came from B&Q, Comet and Woolworths. According to Sir Geoffrey: "It flows from our concentration on markets we know and understand, centred on the home and family, new ideas in-store, which our customers like, and improved operational efficiency."

B&Q's sales grew 14.1 per cent, with like-for-like growth of 9.9 per cent. Profit grew by 75.5 per cent to £97.2 million. A recovery at Comet led to like-for-like sales growth of 13.2 per cent, before additional profits from Norway Retail, acquired in November for a net £25 million, is added.

Dairy, the French electricals market leader, was steady in a difficult market and its like-for-like sales crept up 2.2 per cent. The company acquired a 20 per cent stake in But, a French furniture and electricals retailer, during the year but has not yet decided whether to increase that holding, Sir Geoffrey said.

Woolworths produced record profits, up 28.8 per cent to £84.1 million on like-for-like sales growth of 8.2 per cent. The company is introducing three separate types of Woolworth, depending on location, and is investing in upgrading the look and range of goods available. The three new types are city, heartland and local. So far 117 stores have been converted to the local look.

Earnings per share were 41.7p (31.5p). The final dividend of 5.8p (6.3p), payable on July 1, makes 8.8p (8.8p).

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Tempus, page 32

UniChem spent £16m in bid fight

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

UNICHEM, the pharmaceutical wholesaling and retailing group, spent £16.1 million on its year-long and ultimately fruitless pursuit of Lloyds Chemists, it disclosed yesterday.

The takeover campaign ended on January 17 when UniChem conceded to Germany's Gehe, the rival bidder. UniChem paid £14.2 million in fees, costs and underwriting commission. Financing its 9.9 per cent stake in Lloyds cost UniChem a further £1.9 million, but the company made a net profit on selling the stake of £2.9 million. The bid's net cost was therefore £13.2 million.

After exceptions, UniChem made pre-tax profit in the year to December 31 of £40.3 million, against £49.4 million a year earlier.

Jeff Harris, chief executive, said that UniChem now intends to double the number of Moss Chemists outlets, from the current 450. It plans

Harris: wants more shops to open 100 this year, up from 41 last year. Buying Lloyds would have meant the group controlling 1,300 pharmacies. UniChem is also seeking a big European wholesaling acquisition.

Earnings per share excluding exceptional costs were 20.2p (19p). A final dividend of 5.8p (6.3p), payable on July 1, makes 8.8p (8.8p).

Tempus, page 32

Tempus, page 32



Andrew Calvert, finance director, left, and Dennis Webb, chief executive, saw Beazer sell more houses at higher prices

Rising house sales boost Beazer

HOUSE sales at Beazer Group were up by a fifth, with volume growth and higher selling prices helping the company to raise pre-tax profits 29 per cent to £23.8 million, and Beazer expects the growth to continue in the current year (Carl Morthland writes).

Reservations are up 35 per cent from the same period last year. However, Dennis Webb, chief executive, expects

only 20 per cent of the growth to convert into completions. He said: "The improvement to the market has stretched the thin labour resources pool and we are beginning to experience delays to building programmes in some regions."

Beazer sold 3,126 houses in the half year to December 31, compared with 2,570 in the same period in 1995, and average selling prices were up 18 per cent

to £73,000. However, higher prices did not come from inflation. Mr Webb said the growth stems from Beazer's policy of selling bigger houses. "We are spending more on land, and the land is supporting higher-priced income," he explained.

The company is raising the interim dividend by 5 per cent to 2.1p from earnings of 5.83p, up 27 per cent on last year.

Williams Holdings unveils 49% increase

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

WILLIAMS HOLDINGS, which is in the midst of a £1.3 billion bid for Chubb, yesterday expressed confidence about its main markets this year as it unveiled a 49 per cent rise in full-year profits to £340 million.

Shares in the security and home improvement products company climbed 5p to close at 334.5p.

Williams shares have recovered strongly since initial fears

cash and paper agreed bid for Chubb prompted the shares to fall to 300p. The first closing date for acceptances is Friday.

Headline profits were boosted by a £97 million one-off gain from the sale of its building products division. Operating profits, which were flagged at the time of the bid last month, increased 15 per cent to £269 million. The total dividend rises 5.6 per cent to 15.05p. A final dividend of 9.25p is payable on May 29.

Ionica calls up £215m to develop network

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

IONICA, the telephone operator in Northern Electric and Yorkshire Electricity have large stakes, has secured £215 million to fund expansion in the UK.

The company, which is moving towards a stock market flotation within a year, raised the money in the debt markets by issuing senior discount notes in a debt facility arranged with Bankers Trust, and through a private equity placement completed last month. This means

that Ionica has now raised a total of £400 million.

The new capital will support the start of Ionica's services in the Midlands and the further roll-out of its operations throughout the country.

Ionica last year began connecting customers in eastern England and has attracted 14,000 customers. It intends to expand its network to cover 80 per cent of all phone lines in the UK, excluding Scotland, by 2002.

Advertising spend fuels profits leap

A bigger slice of the fast-growing newspaper advertising spend in the Republic of Ireland helped to fuel a 47 per cent increase in annual pre-tax profits at Independent Newspapers to £17.5 million. Earnings rose 14 per cent to £16.5p a share. Turnover increased 14 per cent to £44.9 million.

In the Republic of Ireland, where Independent controls almost 75 per cent of the domestic newspaper market, operating profits rose 33 per cent to £134 million, with both advertising and circulation income benefiting from the strong growth of the economy. In contrast, New Zealand and Australia were sluggish.

In Britain, losses associated with Independent's 46 per cent stake in News Publishing increased to £1.6 million. Liam Healy, the chief executive, said the joint venture arrangement with Mirror Newspapers was working well, and he rejected speculation that changes were afoot.

A final dividend of 14.6p a share lifts the total 18 per cent to 16.9p.

TT purchase

TT Group, the acquisitive conglomerate, is buying GEC's wire and cables business for £16 million. TT is also taking on certain liabilities. The Wire and Cables Group made a profit of £2 million on sales of £197 million in the year to March 1996. On completion, the business had capital employed of £58 million and borrowings of £24 million.

Visa record

Visa, the plastic debit and credit card provider backed by the UK banks, will today unveil a record 1996, with domestic expenditure rising by 25 per cent to £76.1 billion. The number of cardholders rose by 15 per cent to top 40 million.

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THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARY

It's good to talk
tax treatment

JUST when the Inland Revenue thought the fuse over Michael Alcock had subsided comes news that a TV company is planning a drama "loosely based" on the crooked tax inspector's exploits.

ABTV, maker of *The Wimbledon Poisoner*, is researching a fictional version of the *steamy tale*, aimed at the BBC or Channel 4. The lead role has not yet been lined up it seems, but now that Bob Hoskins has cut his ties with BT...

An inspector calls

MEANWHILE, an equally surreal saga at the Revenue has come to the attention of the House of Commons. The Select Committee on Public Accounts is looking into a tip-off claiming cash is being wasted in a witch hunt at the Revenue's solicitor's office. Staff are being investigated to see who penned a pair of "malicious" anonymous memos. They included an attack on office head, Brian Cleave, alleged to have worn trousers that were too short. The Revenue insists other "honest" claims merited the shake-down.



Knight watch

ANGELA KNIGHT, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, was taken to lunch by her team yesterday. Eleven headed to the press gallery restaurant for what a fellow diner referred to as a "thoroughly boozy" end-of-term celebration. To show their appreciation, they all chipped in and sent Ms Knight away with a hardback copy of *Yes Minister*, signed by all the gang.

Diplomatic dip

WHEN word reached Mike Delaney that the wife of the British ambassador in Paris was looking to promote foods from her homeland, he rustled up samples of his own-recipe mustard *tout de suite*. So enamoured was Lady Sylvia Jay with the pungent condiment that she put in a bulk order, along with a special request for customised labels to be emblazoned "British Embassy Mustard".

Hired hand

FROM words to whisks, Charles Skinner is changing jobs. On April Fool's Day, he will move from editor of *Management Today* to become chief executive of Brandon Hire, the tool and catering equipment hire company. Before journalism, when Skinner was working at 3i, he advised John Laycock, current chief executive of Brandon Hire and soon to be chairman, on selling his business Jay Fastners.

MORAG PRESTON

Tony Blair first sprang to the public's attention when he invented the famously succinct policy that Labour would be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. If Labour wins the election, we shall eventually discover whether this encapsulated a profound insight or was just a pragmatic soundbite. It will certainly not be an easy policy to implement.

Whoever wins the election, the great issue of public finance will be the same. There is a democratic consensus that public spending and taxation should not rise much above the current 40 per cent of national income. If growth of labour-intensive public services such as health and education are even to keep pace with the economy, let alone grow faster, spending elsewhere has to be cut.

Instead, the growth of poverty since the industrial shake-out of the early 1980s has sidelined an ever larger percentage of national income in means-tested social security payments, putting desirable public services under constant pressure. Some £50 billion a year, nearly one-fifteenth of national income, is spent relieving poverty and the indignities it brings. The key is to convert as much of this as possible into areas that cut poverty, instead of relieving it, or remove the indignity from low incomes.

Given a few variations round the edges, the war against poverty is much the same as Labour's intended assault on the causes of crime. Most other underlying causes, such as family break-up, are easier for well-meaning politicians to make worse than to repair. So the key to fiscal policy is also the

Tough on spending and tough on the causes of spending



GRAHAM
SEARJEANT

key to law and order policy. If governments switched taxes and family allowances around a bit, they could start to foot on this virtuous circle of falling poverty and welfare spending without painful cuts. In a sensible world, no-one receiving means-tested benefits would, at the same time pay income tax. Neither Labour nor Tories seem prepared to raise marginal tax rates higher up the income scale to achieve this. As the churches have discovered, it is also now deemed politically incorrect to give extra tax allowances to one-earner families, who make up most of the working poor.

Labour has two different wheezes. The minimum wage, though endorsed by Mr Blair, looks a rare relic of the old party programme. It is likely to be set so low that it offers only limited help to poor families but also carries little threat to low-wage employment. No breakthrough there.

New Labour's centrepiece is a "temporary" new tax on utilities to act as a sort of up-front float for the war on poverty. This cash would be used to train more young people for an economy that has lost millions of unskilled male jobs. By the time it has run out, Labour hopes, a generation of potential

unemployed will be converted from the dead end of poverty to the mainstream of taxpayers, starting the virtuous circle. If this works, the benefits to all taxpayers would be so great that the utility tax (though not its sanctimonious overtones) could be a price well worth paying. But this is a long shot. The chances of the programme paying for itself in lower welfare payments by the end of the coming Parliament look small.

Spending dilemmas are therefore likely to remain. Nowhere will they be sharper than in the fight against crime and the threat of

crime, which probably imposes more indignity on the poor than anything else. The training programmes financed by the utility tax should take some frustrated dead-ends off the streets even if they do not pay for themselves, but will not quickly do much about the causes of crime.

The main emphasis will therefore have to be on being tough on crime. That is becoming ever more expensive. Locking up more regular lawbreakers for longer appears to be effective at cutting crime in the short run, by deterring others or, more clearly, by keeping criminals out of circulation. In Britain, crime rates accelerated sharply when governments tried to save money and souls by avoiding imprisonment if at all possible. In America, crime fell, albeit from a higher base, when public pressure forced more and longer imprisonment. In Britain, reported crime has edged down again ever since tougher penal policies.

Tory spending estimates allow for extra prison numbers and prison places. But most of the extra places would be provided by the private sector and there would still not be enough to cope with the latest watered-down

Crime Bill. The spending plans Labour would inherit also allow for 5,000 extra police constables. But that would surely not be enough to implement an alternative policy of "zero tolerance", hitting the petty street crimes and nuisance offences that bear hardest on poor people and which set the cultural background for the breakdown of order and for more serious crimes.

The Home Office's Budget only accounts for about £7 billion a year out of total public spending of £315 billion. It would be easy to spend a little more here. Avoiding that, however, is what spending disciplines are all about. To achieve any radical impact on crime within five years, Labour would probably have to think hard about the key intermediate cause of street crime and burglary: financing drug use. Yet the main parties have stayed their hand on this as strictly as on monetary union.

There were 115,000 actual drug seizures last year, a record as usual. More than 90 per cent were cannabis or amphetamines. Most offenders were merely cautioned, only 8 per cent imprisoned. The drug problem is not being seriously tackled and soft drug use is not subject to "zero tolerance". The laws of the market remain healthy.

Given Gordon Brown's fiscal edicts, Labour crime battlers would have to decide whether to show zero tolerance to drugs, as a lever to cut other crimes, or to legalise soft drugs in order to cut their price and cut crime that way. When the debate comes, cash will doubtless not figure.

Krupp v Thyssen is an attack on cosy corporatism, says Oliver August

Bid battle with Clausewitzian echoes



Steelworkers from the Thyssen plant in Duisburg take to the streets yesterday in protest at the proposed takeover by Krupp-Hoesch

intent on running off with the host's spouse.

Where the Anglo-American culture hails aggressive bargaining and undisputed success — whether in business or in sport — Germans emphasise cooperation and compromise. These values dominate, on the shopfloor and in the boardroom.

German workers in all but the smallest companies have the right, through representatives, to interfere in the running of their company. Managers will go out of their way to accommodate employees, who make liberal use of their right to strike if their wishes are ignored for long. In private, managers often complain that co-operation can deteriorate into coercion.

A corporatist attitude also pervades among shareholders. Most companies are owned by banks or other industrial companies rather than private individuals. There are two reasons for this. First, few people have private pensions, hence pension funds are not a major player on the stock market. Secondly, the managers of listed companies are trying to protect their company — and hence their own jobs — against takeovers by engaging in mutual shareholding agreements with their rivals. They are assisted by the banks, who believe that cross-holdings are good for growth because they avoid destabilising takeovers.

The origins of this static system can be found in the trauma that Germany suffered in the aftermath of Nazism. When the 1,000-year reich was cut short after 12 years in 1945, many Germans blamed profiteering industrialists for supplying Hitler with guns and tanks without asking any questions.

In the new Germany, they would be tightly bound. Where bosses wanted to make mass sackings they would have to ask for permission first to avoid a repetition of the record unemployment of the 1930s that helped to bring Hitler to power.

The more enlightened industrial leaders are now waking up to the fact that Germany's political trauma is causing economic harm.

for continuity and commitment, the Germans... have found ways of reconciling this tension successfully."

Herr Cromme would certainly not agree. The situation has become so tense that his entirely sensible move is being viewed as a devious act. Rather than resolving tension, the German system is programmed to maintain continuity at almost any price.

But Herr Cromme has not won his fight yet. Many vested interests, from unions to politicians, will defend the so-called Rhine model of capitalism. He will come under intense political pressure to back down. Chancellor Kohl needs to push through further budget cuts to meet the Maastricht criteria for monetary union. The pain created by that will become unacceptable to the public if unemployment rises further.

With a general election next year, the government will want to take few chances. And thanks to Germany's corporate system, politicians have a surprisingly large amount of influence over industry.

The ominous first signs of yet another compromise were visible yesterday. Thyssen and Krupp agreed to talks on setting up a joint company, the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia said. The talks are expected to last eight days and if agreement is reached, the takeover may become unnecessary.

A state government spokesman said: "Should the talks produce no result then both sides would return to their original positions." The talks were arranged by Johannes Rau, Prime Minister of North Rhine-Westphalia, who had denounced Krupp's bid as reminiscent of the "Wild West".

Analysts have pointed out that even if the takeover clears all domestic hurdles, there is still the European Commission. It made no official comment but EU sources said that the case would probably have to be examined under competition rules. The takeover would create the third-largest steel group in Europe in terms of output after British Steel and France's Usinor Sacoil SA.

The spokesman for Karel van Miert, the EU's competition commissioner, said: "We have not received anything from the Bundeskartellamt or the companies involved." But other sources thought Brussels would almost certainly have the power to investigate the bid because of both companies' significant sales outside Germany.

Such an overwhelming counter-attack from a power situated to the west of Germany would have been only too familiar to Clausewitz. In his time, the Prussian army had to yield to the force *majeure* of Napoleon. But his theory stands nevertheless. Germany's corporate culture is under threat even if it manages to extinguish Krupp's bid.

Provision of support for exporters seeking customers at trade fairs

From the Minister for Trade, The Department of Trade and Industry

Sir, As Minister for Trade, I am well aware of the concerns of Ian Campbell and others over the transfer of trade fair support to Sector Challenge. However, I believe that these concerns are misplaced.

The Government is fully committed to assisting businesses in attending trade fairs. The Sector Challenge programme expands the potential resources available for trade fairs.

Obviously they must show value for money, but I share Ian Campbell's view that they will not find it difficult to do so because they make an outstanding contribution.

The quality of the bids received for Sector Challenge funds was excellent. Britain's exporters sold record amounts of goods overseas last year. Sector Challenge is there to help them to do even better.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY NELSON,
The Department of
Trade and Industry,
1 Victoria Street, SW1.

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*On published rates with other airlines as at 1/2/97. All flights are subject to availability. Fares are subject to Government approval and exclude airport taxes and applicable charges.

High taxes eat into Exco profit

Exco, the money broker, yesterday announced a slight decrease in pre-tax profit in 1996 to £18.2 million, from £18.3 million. But after an unusually high tax charge, post-tax profit fell more heavily to £8.5 million, from £11.1 million.

Volumes had declined after March 1996, putting pressure on commissions, although there was a small recovery in October. David Hubbard, chairman, said trading in 1997 had so far given continued cause for caution. A final dividend of 3p is to be paid on May 5. The dividend total of 4.5p for the year is half the 1995 figure.

Sibir Energy to join AIM

Sibir Energy, an oil exploration company based in Russia, is joining the Alternative Investment Market next month valued at £35 million. The company, which is being spun off from Melrose Energy, has raised £3.5 million through a placing with Melrose's shareholders.

The company was bought by Melrose for £19.7 million last June. It has a 20 per cent stake in Eliktron, the Russian oil group, which entitles it to reserves of 178 million oil barrels. Dealings are expected to begin on April 4.

Coutts deal

Coutts Consulting Group is buying Murray Axsmith & Associates, an outplacement consultant based in Toronto, in a deal worth up to £80 million (£27.5 million) in shares and cash.



Crispin Davis, chief executive of Aegis, which yesterday reported profits 18 per cent higher at £39.6 million

Simon Engineering pushed £50.6m into red by charges

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SIMON ENGINEERING, the storage and process engineering group, fell £50.6 million in the red last year after one-off charges took their toll.

But Michael Davies, chairman of Simon, whose management has been battling to achieve a turnaround in the business since 1993, held out promises of a more prosperous future after the company's exit from industrial access equipment. He said: "With the sale of the industrial businesses of the Access Division for \$90 million, Simon Engineer-

ing will finally resolve the debt and balance-sheet issues that have prevented its full recovery."

Simon pulled out of the industrial parts of its access equipment, through which it had become famous as the name on the hydraulic ladders of fire engines, last month with the sale of the division to Terex. The sale, which still hinges on regulatory approval, will enable the company to scale down its debt and to put its pro forma gearing at 43 per cent. Before the sale it had

stood at 117 per cent, and work to reduce the debt mountain of £85.2 million had been the priority for Simon.

The group had been struggling to service such a high level of debt while turning in annual profits in the region of £20 million. Now the company says that management resources that had been tied up in dealing with bankers and lenders can be released to focus on Simon's remaining businesses.

The sale is expected to be finalised next month, with a

withdrawal from other peripheral parts of access equipment coming after completion.

In the year to December 31, Simon took one-off charges totalling £57.4 million, which included £17 million associated with its departure from access equipment; £7 million for the loss of goodwill with that business; a pension prepayment of £14.9 million; £9.5 million for financial and legal restructuring; and £1 million in final settlement of the long-running legal fight with Bute Mining.

Simon's remaining two businesses of storage and process engineering produced operating profits of £17.8 million last year, slightly up from the 1995 total of £17.5 million.

Mr Davies said that the divisions offered "good prospects for sustained growth". The bulk of these profits came from the storage arm which raised operating profits by 4.5 per cent to £11.6 million.

Although the company could pay no final dividend it said that it expected to pay one at the interim stage.

Bowthorpe plans closures

By MARTIN BARROW

BOWTHORPE, the electronics and electrical group, reported a fall in pre-tax profits to £72.86 million in 1996, from £77.46 million, after charging almost £8.5 million against restructuring.

The company is to close three businesses in its data acquisition and environmental sectors, with the likely loss of about 100 jobs. Further

closures and the merger of some smaller businesses has not been ruled out.

The restructuring follows a strategic review by Nicholas Brookes, chief executive. Andrew Vice, chairman, said Bowthorpe was emerging "as a fitter and refocused group."

In the year to December 31, operating profits rose to £81.7 million (£76.1 million) on turnover that rose to £524.85 million (£470.5 million). There

was significant growth in America, driven by automotive and telecommunications, but group profits were held back by weakness of the French and German economies. There was a £1.3 million loss on currency translation, compared with a £2 million gain previously.

Earnings fell to 20.88p a share (23p), but the total dividend is lifted to 10.17p (9.5p), with a final 6.96p. The shares rose 12.2p to 40p.

The company recorded

having recently added a digital edit suite.

The Sunet and Nine production facilities, merged last year, won a contract for Channel Five programming. Visions, the outside broadcaster, reversed losses in 1995, having won contracts with Sky Sports.

Net debt fell to £470,000 (£1.7 million). A final dividend of 2p, makes a 3p total, payable on May 6.

ACCOUNTANCY

Beware the two-pronged attack

Ian Barlow tells companies to prepare to face closer scrutiny from the Revenue's inspectors

The "Spend to Save" initiative, the Chancellor's big Budget idea, comes into force on April 1. The Inland Revenue, the Department of Social Security and Customs and Excise will endeavour to deliver his target of an extra £6.7 billion tax take.

The Revenue's share of this bonanza involves deploying 2,000 additional staff over a three-year period at a cost of £190 million, with the aim of collecting an additional £2 billion in tax. As well as reassessing trained inspectors of taxes to these duties, the department is recruiting some 40 accountants to specialise in investigation work, doubling the existing resources. Nonetheless, the key elements of the team will be in place by the end of this month.

An investigation is far removed from the approach adopted in the agreement of tax liabilities in the past. Substantial costs can be involved, which the taxpayer will have to bear, and significant management time — perhaps extending over years — can be absorbed by it.

Is the collection of an additional £2 billion feasible? In the tax profession, we believe it is a tall order. Since 1992, Revenue investigation work has pro-



Ian Barlow says an extra £2 billion tax is a tall order

duced receipts of around £1.7 billion annually. An increase of 40 per cent in the annual take will be difficult to achieve, even with additional manpower, given that the new staff will have to be recruited and trained, and that large investigations take time to reach a conclusion.

More pertinently, it is simply not true that massive amounts of tax are lost to the Treasury through artificial avoidance schemes. January's much-increased government revenue figures reflect the cyclical nature of tax revenue. Most of tax advisers' work is involved with preventing clients being unfairly damaged by spurious tax charges arising from normal commercial transactions, rather than the off-the-wall tax planning often portrayed. The Revenue's explicit attempt to blur the distinction between legal tax avoidance and illegal tax evasion is regrettable.

Nevertheless, as the centrepiece of the Chancellor's Budget strategy, Spend to Save is for real. Larger companies are certain to be the main focus of the Revenue's attention, particularly those with low effective rates of tax.

Companies in the financial sector are also thought to be at risk. Even so, to raise this much

clearly it makes sense for the Revenue to concentrate their attention in this area. Companies with substantial international involvement are also vulnerable, because of the scope for dispute on transfer pricing issues: so also are companies regarded as having used aggressive (or even not so aggressive) tax planning techniques in the past.

Companies in the financial sector are also thought to be at risk. Even so, to raise this much

money it is inevitable that every branch and district of the Revenue will be under pressure to increase its take.

The Revenue will be developing computer-based systems to select its most suitable targets for investigation. Benchmarking, the process of comparing companies with competitors, will be the basis of its approach. KPMG has responded to this by developing its own analytical model, which weighs companies' perfor-

mance against benchmark standards to identify those vulnerable to attack.

This takes into account four specific risk factors: the tax compliance history, public information on the company's activities, accounts issues, and membership of any of the Revenue's known target categories. Companies will need this information if they are to keep one step ahead.

What action can companies take? They face attack from two directions. The first concerns process.

The sheer scale of many organisations makes it difficult to establish precisely the information required for tax purposes, which is often quite distinct from the needs of commercial accounting.

The second issue concerns handling the Revenue's tough-
er investigatory stance. Companies will have to examine the robustness of their processes. They need to cover not only the treatment of routine transactions, but also the approach taken to one-off events such as business acquisitions and disposals. Many stand-alone tax departments may be vulnerable partly because many have been downsized.

The Chancellor is "spending to save". Companies, also, need to be spending now to bring their tax systems up to the mark, if they are to save the potentially enormous costs of an Inland Revenue investigation at a later date.

Ian Barlow is UK Head of Tax, KPMG

expect an announcement concerning a Big Six partner on the verge of early retirement. Whether he will juggle with the poisoned chalice for long is another question.

Life partnership

A QUARTER of a century ago, the dozen of partnership taxation thought that he would write a book about it. As mate-

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

rial for a bestseller it seemed unlikely. But Eddie Ray, then a partner in Spicer & Pegler, has seen his work mushroom through the years. Now we see the fifth edition of *Ray: Partnership Taxation* hitting the streets in loose-leaf fashion. Ray himself has long since taken himself off to a retirement of birdwatching in the Norfolk Broads, but a former partner of his, Nigel Davey,

has co-written the book at what is now Deloitte & Touche. Legislation may be pending but Davey is convinced. "Partnerships will go on for ever," he said this week.

Andy experience

MORE rumours surround the imminent step-down of Andrew Likierman, head of the Government's accountancy

service and top accounting civil servant at the Treasury. With the report into the governance of the English ICA advocating a high-profile name at the top, some are wondering whether Likierman will pause only to collect his knighthood before taking over the running of the profession from a Moorgate Place eyrie. It would make his efforts to bring a semblance of accruals accounting into the Civil Service seem easy by comparison.

ROBERT BRUCE

AT 14.400/15.00

Aegis at the double in US deals

By FRASER NELSON

AEGIS, Europe's largest buyer of advertising space, is to double its presence in America with the purchase of two media consultancies for up to \$44 million.

The company, which last October made its first foray into the US with the acquisition of an advertising agency based in New York, will complete its US expansion after buying ICG, an agency based in Los Angeles. It is also paying up to \$14 million for MMA, an advertising consultancy that advises on marketing strategy.

The company, of which Crispin Davis is chief executive, lifted pre-tax profits 18 per cent, to £39.6 million, last year, on sales up 2 per cent, at £345 billion. The resumed dividend is 6.6p per share, with a final 0.35p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

New titles help lift Trinity International

PROFITS doubled at Trinity International Holdings, the regional newspaper publisher, in the year to December 29. The contribution of titles bought from the Thomson Corporation in January last year helped to lift pre-tax profit 104 per cent to £56.2 million, from £27.5 million. Exceptional items included a £5.7 million profit on the sale of Trinity's Canadian publishing operations and a £2.4 million charge for redundancies and restructuring.

Turnover was also boosted by the £327 million acquisition from Thomson, rising 98 per cent to £333 million (£168 million).

The operating margin rose to 18.9 per cent (16.4 per cent).

Earnings per share were 28.3p (21.5p), excluding the Canadian disposal. The dividend rises to 11.8p (10.7p), with a final 3.2p due on May 2. Philip Graf, chief executive, said that the current year had started well, while the future of the US division was still under review.

Share price set at CAT

CAMBRIDGE ANTIBODY TECHNOLOGY, a specialist in monoclonal antibodies, has priced its shares at 500p, which will value the enlarged company at £109 million when it floats on the stock market. CAT is raising £8 million from a £41 million placing of £8.25 million shares. David Chiswell, the company's chief executive, said CAT was "greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm" from institutional investors. First dealings in the shares will be on March 25.

Clydeport's turnover hit

CLYDEPORT, the privatised port services company with operations at Glasgow, Greenock and Hunterston, suffered a setback in 1996 because of volatility in trade of imported coal from Colombia and South Africa. Imported animal feed and forestry products. Pre-tax profits were static at £5.3 million on turnover down to £17.45 million, from £18.18 million. The total dividend rises to 4.8p, from 4.4p, with a final 3.3p. Earnings per share were 13.59p (13.49p).

Xenova in Zeneca link

SHARES in Xenova jumped 65p, to 420p, yesterday after the drug development company announced a collaboration with Zeneca, the big pharmaceuticals group. Xenova will screen Xenova's "libraries" of natural compounds prepared from plant, fungal and microbial sources in search of potential new drugs. Zeneca will have exclusive rights to the products, but Xenova will receive milestone payments and royalties. Xenova also reported pre-tax losses for 1996 of £7.8 million (£8 million).

No dividend at Try

THE upturn in construction helped Try Group to return to profit last year. The building contractor and housebuilder made pre-tax profits of £1.05 million for 1996, against a £4.3 million loss in 1995. Earnings of 15.2p a share compared with a 6.35p loss last time. There is, however, again no dividend. Try, which ended the year with net cash of £5.5 million, said that it sought to increase its land bank this year. House sales were currently slightly ahead of last year at higher average prices.

Carriers back in black

UNITED CARRIERS, the parcels and freight delivery group, returned to the black in 1996, earning £2.1 million before tax, compared with losses of £1.9 million in 1995. The company said that the turnaround reflected higher volumes, particularly in the second half, and cost control. Turnover rose to £136 million, from £127.47 million. Earnings per share of 5.3p compared with a 5.6p loss per share previously. The total dividend rises to 3.4p, from 3.2p, with a 1.8p final.

Unconventional road leads Tweedie to top

TODAY it will be announced that Sir David Tweedie has won this year's Founding Societies' Centenary Award, the accountancy profession's equivalent of the Nobel prize, though without its money.

The award commemorates the 1980 centenary of the English ICA and is made by the four accountancy societies that together founded the original institute. It is a combination of the traditions of the past leavened with a bit of pragmatism from our own times.

Sir David, chairman of the Accounting Standards Board, fits well with the past winners, who have tended, like Sir Paul Girolami of Glaxo, Jim Thompson, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and Lord Wakeham, to be people who have followed their own personalities and quirks to good effect. Sir David has great clarity of mind and an amiable disposition. It means that he is able to tell people that they are wrong without them taking too much offence.

Soon after he had got into his stride as chairman of the Accounting Standards Board, Sir David was the subject of a profile in *The Scotsman*. He still has one of the placards that the newspaper used to sell the story to the uneasy folk of Edinburgh framed on his office wall. "The Most Hated Accountant in Britain?", it asked. Certainly not. No one could hate Sir David.

He found his views irritating. They could be annoyed when he wrongfooted them over the facts that lie behind some nonsensical piece of off-balance sheet flim-flam or other. Even Ron Paterson, of Ernst & Young, who has put up with the most spirited opposition to the Tweedie line, would be hard put to say he disliked him. The two of them even have an agreement that one provides the other with a bottle of best malt whisky at the end of the football season. Who does the providing depends on the performance of Partick Thistle and Falkirk. Currently, only goal difference separates them in the Scottish first division.

But behind the charm lies the toughness. You do not manage to reform a whole range of financial reporting rules through which the finance directors of some of the country's finest companies had been managing to drive a coach and horses on the basis of a good repertoire of jokes and a pleasant manner. Sir David's secret lies in the combination of two factors. He is academically brighter than

most accountants and he is, to most in the largest accountancy firms, an outsider. That combination allows him to note things that those who are more dependent on the culture of the Big Six would rather not. And it allows him to refute the arguments of others in a logical way. Much of this comes from his training, his early career and his mentors. It is interesting that the people and institutions he cites as his main influences are all of the Establishment — of which he is fiercely critical when need be.

The first mentor is David Flint, with whom the young Tweedie went to train in the late 1960s at Mann Judd in Glasgow. Flint was also Professor of Accountancy at Glasgow University, a post he held for more than 20 years. Sir David recalls an initial dispute over cash. Flint initially rebuffed him — and then took him on at the rate Tweedie wanted but in the post

Up lift
national

CAT

Hickey hi

C

Gilts and equities sharply lower

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1996/97	High	Low	Company	Price	£	1/4	Yield	PE
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES								
556	407	406	ABF (Brewing)	62.7	-	6	6.4	13.8
511	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
452	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
409	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
370	227	224	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
623	413	410	ABF (Brewing)	67.7	-	21	2.7	12.5
589	421	418	ABF (Brewing)	65.7	-	21	2.7	12.5
141	127	125	ABF (Brewing)	71.5	-	9.4	5.1	11.1
347	127	125	ABF (Brewing)	71.5	-	9.4	5.1	11.1
BANKS								
4780	2743	2704	ABN-AMRO	65.6	-	6	6.4	13.8
511	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
452	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
409	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
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141	127	125	ABF (Brewing)	71.5	-	9.4	5.1	11.1
347	127	125	ABF (Brewing)	71.5	-	9.4	5.1	11.1
BREWERY, PUBS & RESTAURANTS								
578	2743	2704	ABN-AMRO	65.6	-	6	6.4	13.8
511	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
452	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
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347	127	125	ABF (Brewing)	71.5	-	9.4	5.1	11.1
BREWERIES, PUBS & RESTAURANTS								
578	2743	2704	ABN-AMRO	65.6	-	6	6.4	13.8
511	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
452	215	212	ABF (Brewing)	72.7	-	17	4.5	17.1
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347	127	125	ABF (Brewing)	71.5	-	9.4	5.1	11.1
BUILDING & CONSTRUCT								
347	15	14	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
219	40	39	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
578	165	162	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
511	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
452	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
409	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
370	227	224	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
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141	127	125	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
347	127	125	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
BUILDING & CONSTRUCT								
347	15	14	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
219	40	39	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
578	165	162	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
511	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
452	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
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589	421	418	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
141	127	125	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
347	127	125	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
EDUCATION								
578	165	162	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
511	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
452	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
409	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
370	227	224	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
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141	127	125	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
347	127	125	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
FOOD								
578	165	162	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
511	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
452	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
409	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
370	227	224	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
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409	215	212	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
370	227	224	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
623	413	410	ABP Inds	24	-	14	2.1	10.5
589	421	418	ABP Inds	24	-</			

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Brands that came out of the vending closet

Amanda Roberts on the growth of big names on drinks machines



Vending machines are now advertising opportunities

Brands sell products. Retailers and product manufacturers worldwide are well aware of the power of the brand and that by advertising where a big brand is on offer, sales can be significantly increased. Vending, which is in many ways an extension of the retail industry, was slow to wake up to the potential of big brands, but once it did, progress was rapid.

Just a few years ago, most machines would feature a generic and often fairly insipid fascia panel with some sort of design, on a boring brown, grey or white cabinet machine. Today, machines are fully branded to promote the product on sale. The branding can cover the machine or be limited to a single panel or "decal", the sticker by the selection panel that tells the user what particular brand of coffee or tea he is selecting. The vending machine is essentially one huge advertising panel.

The soft drinks manufacturers were the first to recognise the potential of branding machines and eventually, the rest of the industry started to follow suit. Nestle introduced a series of beverage machines which were branded top to toe with the retail style packaging of its Nescafe brand. Kraft Jacobs Suchard have done the same, featuring the red Kenco coffee jar. Cadbury brands up its confectionary machines: Premier Beverages promotes

pensed is one which they recognise and with which they associate a certain quality. It builds loyalty with the consumer and increases sales. Premier Beverages, which supplies Cadbury's branded hot chocolate drinks to the vending industry, conducted a case study at a busy site in Warrington where the catering manager had decided to replace the existing non-branded hot chocolate drink with Cadbury's. In three weeks, chocolate sales rose 20 per cent, settling to an overall 15 per cent increase in sales over six months.

The industry keeps pushing the branding concept into new areas. Springbank Industries is a supplier of vending services which has developed a series of branding concepts to different market sectors. Suites of machines are supplied in a fully integrated system with the company's own Gold Choices brand featuring throughout.

Now market activity revolves around creating more eye-catching ways of promoting brands on machines. State-of-the-art technology creates 3D and moving images, and sophisticated printing techniques improve definition, graphics and colour.

Gone are the days when the vending machine sat quietly in the corner — now it shouts about its presence, loudly!

which may be serving a poor product. It is an indication of how quality has improved in the market and how perception of vending has changed that brand owners are now quite happy to put their names to, and promote, the product dispensed.

Development of branded vending in sectors other than the canned soft drinks was slow largely due to the reticence of brand owners to put their names to machines over which they had no control and

Branding does work for vending. It gains the confidence of the consumer that the product which will be dis-

pensed is one which they recognise and with which they associate a certain quality. It builds loyalty with the consumer and increases sales. Premier Beverages, which supplies Cadbury's branded hot chocolate drinks to the vending industry, conducted a case study at a busy site in Warrington where the catering manager had decided to replace the existing non-branded hot chocolate drink with Cadbury's. In three weeks, chocolate sales rose 20 per cent, settling to an overall 15 per cent increase in sales over six months.

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From holy water to hot soup

Colin Emmins traces the history of coin-in-the-slot food and drink

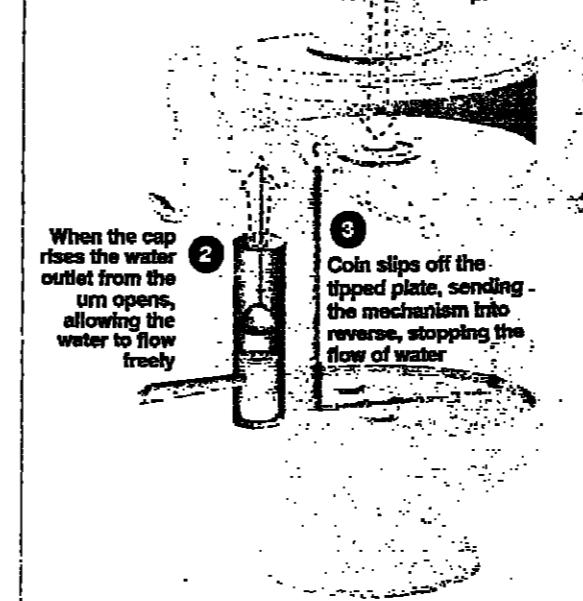
HERO of Alexandria designed the first known coin-operated vending machine, dispensing holy water from a covered urn, in 215BC. How much water the worshipper received was a matter of chance and Hero's idea lay dormant for 2,000 years.

Automatic refreshment machines appeared next in Britain in Victorian times, when original patents included a coin-operated drinks dispenser and a mechanism for delivering biscuits and water.

Most early machines, however, supplied packets of chocolate and, later, chewing gum on the column-and-drawer principle still in use. The vending machine soon established itself at railway stations and spread to the high street, where refreshment could be obtained from outdoor machines when shops were shut. By 1939 most people were accustomed to coin-operated refreshment but the Second World War halted operations as manufacturers were diverted to war work and confectionery was rationed.

When vending resumed in Britain after 1945, more versatile American machines became available, offering greater choice of foods: sandwiches, crisps and other packaged snacks. Vending liquid refreshment also became more common. Machines vending packaged milk were popular during the Fifties, although inflation later halted the trade since the law decreed that milk be sold in standard

HERO'S HOLY WATER DISPENSER



trolley in the workplace. Further technology enabled hot and cold drinks to be served from the same machine. By 1970 more than 100,000 vending machines were said to be installed in firms throughout the UK. Sales of hot drinks alone totalled about £47 million.

Later, the in-cup vending system let the supplier fill individual cups with dry ingredients and stack and seal them before despatch to the vending site, with water added on site to dissolve the ingredients and provide the drink required.

The early Seventies confronted the industry with two major changes — decimal currency and value added tax. Decimisation demanded adjustment of equipment to handle the new coinage; value added tax required fine price adjustments. The necessary changes encouraged makers to embrace the electronic revolution by installing additional features which the microprocessor could offer.

A new breed of vending machine offered more choice, more accurate detection of false coins and more flexible pricing. Refreshment machines went into more sites — leisure centres, hospitals, budget hotel chains, airports, motorway service stations, garage forecourts — so that the public now spends about £1 billion a year on vended refreshment.

● The author's book *Automatic Vending Machines* is available from Shire Publications, £2.25.

quantities and technology had yet to allow for multi-coin vending.

In the Fifties, too, American hot-drink vending came to Britain. Electricity powered the new machines, heating the water and providing smoother activation of the coin mechanism. The hot drinks were made with powders. Powdered tea posed initial problems but soluble tea, coffee and milk eventually proved more acceptable.

Electrical power also enabled coin-operated machines to sell chilled drinks. For this purpose soft drinks were prepared in advance in a sealed container which the vending machine had only to chill before dispensing. A second method involved mixing a concentrate with chilled, fizzy water inside the machine for dispensing when required.

Other machines pioneered in America sold chilled, bottled soft drinks and, later, cans.

Annual sales of machines supplying snack foods and drinks doubled between 1965 and 1970 as the vending machine superseded the tea

All operator members of the trade association must achieve Quality Assured Status by next year

The campaign for higher standards

Three years ago the Automatic Vending Association of Britain (AVAB) began developing a standard, initially for operating companies (the firms responsible for cleaning and refilling machines) which would exert control over the way in which member companies provide their services, *Amanda Roberts* writes.

The Quality Initiative provides a method for setting, monitoring and maintaining quantifiable standards. It is specific to the vending industry and offers accreditation to qualifying firms.

Janette Gledhill, the director of the AVAB, says: "The Quality Initiative is a direct result of our determination to demonstrate the high standards to which member operating companies now conform. The focus of the initiative is on addressing and eliminating customer

concern by meeting customer needs."

More than 50 per cent of operator members have achieved Quality Assured Status and by January 1, 1998, it will become mandatory for all operators in membership. All operators have assessment books, but the association has budgeted for the eventuality that not all will achieve accreditation first time. All other full members of the AVAB — which includes manufacturers, commodity suppliers and distributors — will also have to achieve Quality Assured Status by 2001.

The AVAB has recruited a team of quality co-ordinators whose task is to help companies through the accreditation process and then with carrying out an annual audit to ensure that standards are maintained. The first audits have been held and only minimal corrective action



KPPA MATTHEWS

Jay and Val Taylor of Carovale Supplies achieved Quality Initiative status

has been necessary, though the AVAB is prepared to end a company's membership if the audit reveals problems.

David Ingram, the national chairman of the AVAB, believes positive results are already being seen. Independent research shows an improvement in the customers' perception of quality.

The next step will be a book, which is being dubbed *The Vending Bible*, sched-

QUALITY INITIATIVE IN ACTION

CAROVALE Supplies is a small local vending operating company based in Buntingford, Hertfordshire. It has been trading for 19 years and was one of the first six companies to achieve the AVAB Quality Initiative in April 1995.

The company approached the scheme in an unusual way by giving the responsibility for introducing the necessary procedures, documentation and training throughout the company to Jay Taylor, the son of company co-founder and director, Val Taylor.

Jay was just starting his year out from a BA Honours sandwich course in financial studies at Wolverhampton University. During this time he had to complete a business-related project which would be assessed and contribute to the class of degree awarded. Choosing to introduce the Avab quality scheme at Carovale was a project which involved him in achieving a specific objective which would have a long-term benefit for the company.

There are six main sections to the Avab Quality Initiative:

- Contracts: a simple statement of services to the customer.
- Document control: concerned with the control of the flow of information throughout the company.
- Operations control: standardising methods to ensure staff work to the same standards.

Customer care: includes the introduction of a complaints procedure for customers and staff.

Training: individual plans are necessary for each member of staff.

Corrective action: ensures that complaints are followed up and problems resolved.

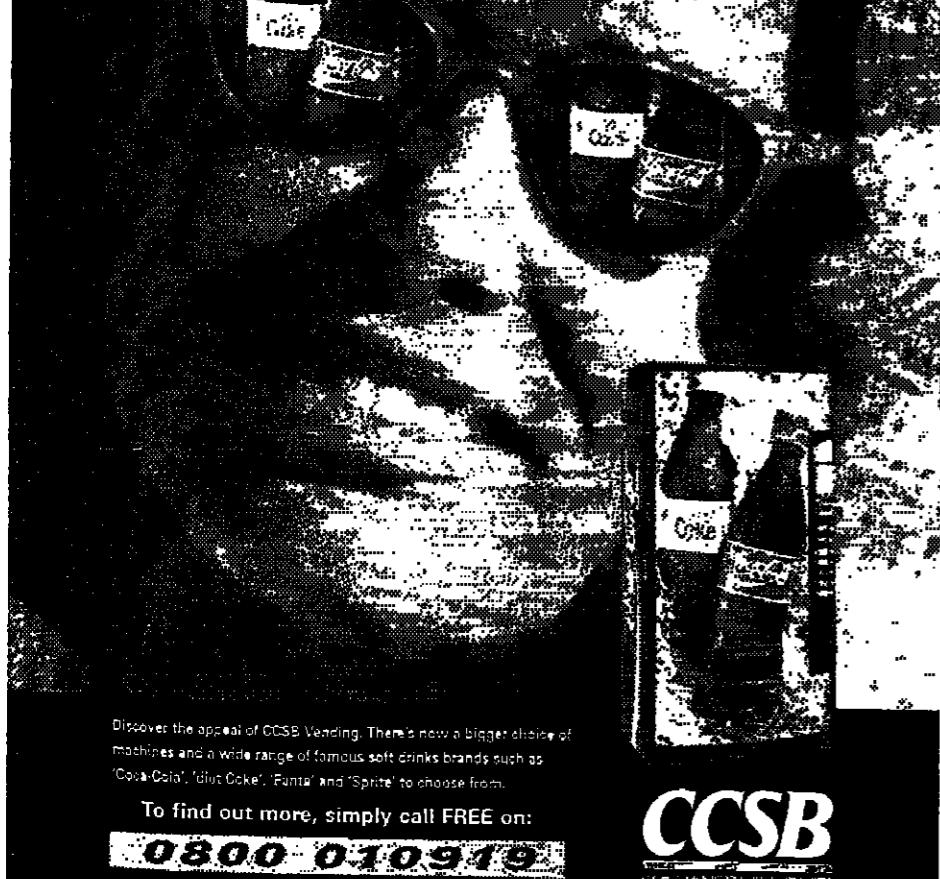
THE first task faced by Jay was to put together the necessary documentation, which involved writing procedures for all company functions and rewriting individual work instructions. The procedures then had to be implemented for all personnel, including new recruits and the company assessed by the Avab's quality co-ordinator. Carovale Supplies was successful, achieving Quality Assured Status on the first attempt in five months.

Now, two years later, Carovale Supplies is reaping the benefits. Val Taylor says: "Our intention was to ensure systematic and uniform working methods throughout the company which would enhance our service to customers and also generate involvement from all our staff."

"We now feel that we have a system in place which is invaluable for the induction of new employees and also a sound framework which will sustain us for future growth."

Jay was awarded a first for his project.

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NICHOLS



Tony Minnis, managing director of Save A Cup, explains his company's recycling operation to David Bellamy

Tony turns in a cup winning performance

The wrapper round the bar of chocolate you have just bought from the machine on Platform 3 is a temporary problem for you — you just find a bin and throw it away. But for the operator, it is a challenge.

The European Union's packaging directive imposes an obligation on industry to recover or recycle at least half its packaging by the year 2001, and vending machine operators are going to find it tough.

The British approach is to encourage each industry sector to set up co-operatives for recovery and recycling. One of the most innovative of these is Save A Cup, the company set up by the hot-drinks vendors to recycle plastic cups.

Offices in the scheme have placed cup disposal bins shaped like an upturned mushroom next to every coffee machine. Empty cups are put upside down into a tube, allowing the excess liquid to drip into a reservoir. The cleaner empties the bin, storing the cups for collection.

The material is made into pellets which are then transformed into a range of promotional items such as rulers and

Chris Partridge reports on the campaign to make recycling part of the life of every office

coasters, filing trays, and even video cases for Boots.

Although many firms operate the system successfully, it has several drawbacks, says the company's managing director, Tony Minnis. "We cannot push Save A Cup into every area of the country because every new town adds to the cost per ton recovered," he says. "We tried using third-party collectors or local councils, but nothing we did reduced the cost."

The answer proved to be an adaptation of a familiar office machine: the shredder. Mr Minnis realised the potential when he was looking at the output of a machine that flaked cups into small chips. "I realised we got a two to one reduction in volume, which might help to reduce the cost of collection," he explains.

A prototype flaker was built and tested in various sites in Bristol, with such success that the scheme is going national. A shredder for plastic cups is

launched next month at the vending industry show Avex '97 (see below). It costs £350, plus VAT and delivery.

The shredder is a box similar in size to the familiar paper shredder, with a cup-sized hole in the top. Once a drink has been consumed the empty cup is placed inside, where the machine quietly slices it into flakes which fall into a bag.

The bags are collected by the delivery man for the vending company, which holds all the flaked plastic until there is enough for Save A Cup to collect and recycle.

Reverse delivery, as the trade calls this process, is a major step forward for Save A Cup as it can now expand to cover the country without buying more trucks. The benefits are substantial, according to Mr Minnis. "We get extremely good results provided a scheme is introduced proactively and com-

municated to the customer's staff," he says. "We get up to 69 per cent of cups back if it is done well, but this falls back to 50 per cent if not."

Mr Minnis believes that the shredder could transform Save A Cup's prospects of conforming with the EU directive. "I am very optimistic. The first year will be very slow as the operation and the distribution channels get into gear, but we are getting tremendous amounts of interest," he says.

One thing it will never do is make money. "Over the next few years the cost of operation will be reduced. If we are lucky with the price of polystyrene we could break even, but I doubt it," Mr Minnis says.

Gradually, the message is getting across. Even the organisers of marathons are looking at Save A Cup to help with the piles of plastic cups left in the street after the runners pass a drinks station. Instead of just throwing them away, the cups are bagged up and sent to the nearest Save A Cup participating company, from where they are sent on for recycling. The waste from a large half-marathon could end up as 1,000 plastic rulers, or 2,000 plantpots.

THE office may seem quiet late at night, but these days your vending machine could be making a phone call. It may even be on the radio. Peter Brown writes.

Some machines are being fitted with a

The machine knows what you've bought

the next day, and which products they

need. Rose Hadden, of GPT Telemetry, which makes the units, says they can save 20 per cent of operating costs by cutting our unnecessary visits. "You can organise your stock," she says. "The unit also tells you if the power has been cut off or the door opened."

Based in Liverpool, GPT links machines to phone lines, and offers a low-power radio hop if the nearest telephone is too far away.

Another firm, Paknet (part of Vodaphone), operates a telecommunications network for such devices. "It's a radio-based service," says Mark Brunwin, senior marketing manager, "so there are no fixed wires. If you move the machine, the communications move with it. The system monitors temperature and power and tells you if the coin mechanism is jammed."

THE office may seem quiet late at night, but these days your vending machine could be making a phone call. It may even be on the radio. Peter Brown writes.

Some machines are being fitted with a

unit which uses an electro-mechanical relay system to register every purchase.

The unit downloads the information via a phone line or radio link to a remote controller, perhaps hundreds of miles away, running thousands of machines.

The controller uses the data to decide which machines should be visited first

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Food and drink dispensers are a perpetual temptation to children. Amanda Roberts reviews the moves towards healthy meal breaks.

Could this mean the end of the tuck shop?

The vending industry has made real efforts over the past decade to improve its image. Playing an important part in this are the several codes of practice and the code of ethics to which the Automatic Vending Association of Britain (AVAB) expects its members to conform.

At the nuts-and-bolts end, an AVAB technical handbook provides guidance and support on such issues as water hygiene, microbiological recommendations, testing of water treatment units, hygiene, machine operation, control of substances hazardous to health, routine testing for electrical safety and product labelling.

On the broader front, the code of ethics and the customer charter outline the way in which member companies

should carry out their business. The main requirement in the code of ethics is that members "supply high quality service and products to the public at all times" while the customer charter goes into more detail about service requirements. It forms "the basis for a continuing, satisfactory fair-trading relationship with customers" and covers such issues as service response, spare parts provision and value-for-money.

A further code of practice covers the controversial issue of vending in schools. Vending machines are now part of the catering offered at schools throughout the country and often contribute significantly to a school's income, but they have not been welcomed with open arms. Parents and teachers are worried that such machines encourage children

to eat more chocolate and crisps and buy sugary soft drinks.

The AVAB has been working with the Schools Nutrition Action Groups, SNAGS, to devise a code of practice for vending in schools. SNAGS are school-based alliances in which staff, pupils and caterers work together to review and expand the overall range of food and drink provided through the tuck shop, vending machines, the midday meal, breakfasts and catering at social functions.

The key points of the code of practice for vending in schools maintain that AVAB members have a responsibility to provide a choice of products. This should include, for instance, low-calorie drinks, decaffeinated coffee (where hot drinks are supplied), fresh fruit, low-fat crisps and nuts. Vending

should not be viewed in isolation but as one part of the total catering provision.

The AVAB says it has had no complaints about the activities of member companies in school vending since the code of practice was introduced, although it often receives requests from schools for more information.

Despite these initiatives, however, vending packages offered to schools do not always include healthy options. Some major soft-drinks manufacturers will offer free machines, strongly branded with their product, often in conjunction with a form of "sponsorship", which means that the site benefits financially from the machine placement.

In return, the site is restricted to stocking the machine with products from that manufacturer, which may or may not include a strong portfolio of healthier drinks — sugar-free fruit juice, milk or flavoured waters.

This is not an unusual approach and the same package would probably be offered to other sites such as factories, leisure centres and airports, for instance, without anyone raising an eyebrow. In schools, of course, there are wider issues to consider.

Schools can always refuse these packages if they do not feel that they offer the appropriate balance of refreshments. And there are other



Pretzels, left, and pitta with healthy fillings can be vended



at schools in response to parents' concern over junk food

options available, although the financial package may differ.

The Dairy Industry Federation is starting to penetrate the schools market with machines vending milk in cartons with straws. In fact, the federation is behind a move to ensure that all schools have milk available, through machines or otherwise.

Flavoured milk is proving the most popular variety among children, although semi-skimmed milk is also offered, as well as fruit juices. The biggest problem with

vending milk is the packaging. The carton with a straw is often perceived as a childish way of taking a drink by teenagers, who will refuse it in favour of a product in a can. This problem is being addressed.

With a little imagination, the product offered in a machine can be transformed. Deutsche Wurlitzer makes glass-fronted snack merchandisers. It is not tied to any manufacturers of chocolates or snacks and its machines do not have to feature their advertising. In fact, its machines, in common

with most glass-fronted snack merchandisers, can vend a much wider product range than they are usually asked to.

Deutsche Wurlitzer is sponsoring an initiative to introduce healthier snacks to school vending machines. The company is launching a recipe sheet offering ten healthy alternatives devised by Dr Jenny Poulier, a nutritionist.

The recipes are based on fieldwork from the Heart in the Mouth project, a year-long experiment in encouraging healthier eating patterns in Kent schools. This project

found that children will choose healthy snacks, provided they are packaged, marketed and priced correctly.

Among the recipes which Deutsche Wurlitzer is introducing are garlic or onion pretzels and pittas filled with Swedish meatballs. Recipes list full nutritional information and contain less than 5g fat and below 5g non-milk extrinsic sugar (the sort which damages teeth).

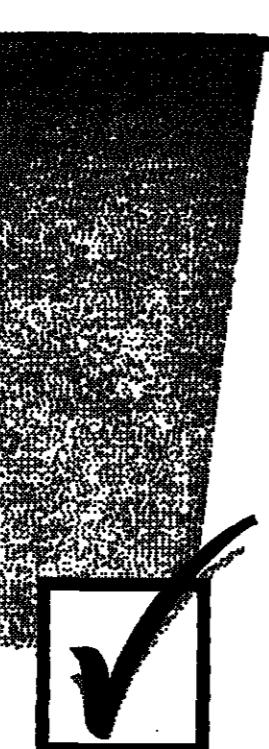
The recipes have been devised to enable any school caterer to produce them easily. The machine will do the rest.

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Plastic puts pressure on pennies

Cashless systems are growing fast. Stephen Hoare on the development of a multipurpose card

This is money we can save," Mr Barnes says.

The cashless solution comes in the form of plastic swipe cards or contactless chips that can be issued to staff to use instead of money. A swipe card or a microchip holds a store of electronic credits, some of which are automatically debited as the card is passed through a vending machine or till. But will employees take to adding yet another credit card?

Possibly — especially if the cashless card can incorporate other functions. When Winterthur Life, the insurance group, wanted to go cashless at its headquarters in Basingstoke it asked Quintus Systems to come up with a card which staff could use in the company restaurant and in place of their existing security swipe cards.



More than 80 per cent of cashless cards incorporate multiple functions and many double as access control, photo ID and personnel files. Companies can use the cashless cards to provide management information.

Mars Electronics, makers of payment systems for vending machines, have just taken the idea of the multicard one step further. Launched last month, the firm's Multicard Smart is compatible with Mondex, one of a new generation of electronic cash cards being developed by the three leading credit card companies, Mastercard, Visa and American Express.

By the turn of the century we will probably be familiar with the new E-cards under names such as Mondex, Visacash and Proton. Their sponsor's aim is to hold a major share of cash transactions by replacing money in people's wallets. Andy Matko, the Mars cashless marketing manager, says "We are linking a public cash card to a closed site. And we are offering our customers

the option of having a cashless system which will be compatible with a national cash card."

Cashless systems now account for one in eight of all new vending machines — twice as many as three years ago. Keith Tuson, managing director of VendePac, says "Cashless is going to spread very fast. The thought of having to adapt machines yet again because of coinage changes like the new 50p and the £2 coin is concentrating a few minds."

Mr Matko says: "We have seen the market for cashless double over the past four years right across Europe. Now that has to be significant against the background of the vending industry which has only been growing at a rate of 3 to 4 per cent each year." Meanwhile Mr Barnes is taking a leaf out of Bill Gates's book. He has developed his own software application — Girovend for Windows.

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Changes to currency are a headache for manufacturers of coin mechanisms, who have to be warned well in advance of any changes, says John Young

What a new coin really costs

On July 1 2002 the euro is due to become the only currency of the European Union. If all goes according to plan, the pound, franc, mark and lire will be consigned to history. The inhabitants of this brave new world will have had just six months to accustom themselves to the new coins.

If the new European superstate fails to materialise, however, the Royal Mint and its counterparts across the Continent will have wasted three years working flat out to produce the countless billions of coins needed to service it.

This continuing uncertainty does not make life any easier for the manufacturers of coin boxes and vending machines. Every change in the shape, size, weight and composition of the coinage means that each machine has to be reprogrammed to accept the new and reject the old.

In Britain the new 50p and £2 coins will come into circulation

on September 1 and November 1 respectively this year. The Automatic Vending Association of Britain has estimated that switching to these will cost its members some £27 million.

Weighed against the great issues of national sovereignty and economic prosperity which the euro debate encompasses, the interests of the vending industry may seem trivial. Any decision on a change of coinage is a matter for national governments, in Britain's case the Treasury in consultation with the Royal Mint.

Changes are usually made for convenience purposes: the present 50p coin, like the old copper coins of pre-decimalisation days, is considered cumbersome and its size out of proportion to its value.

But the vending industry is much more involved than is realised. Not only is it advised

of impending changes in coinage long before the public, but its leaders are routinely called on for advice and comment. For example, it is three years since senior staff at Mars Electronic International (MEI), makers of coin mechanisms, were invited to meet officials from the Treasury

best it can hope for. Several national governments still favour an overnight "big bang" changeover, as when Britain converted to a decimalised currency.

Whether or not Britain joins the new currency, MEI is assuming that other countries, led by France and Germany, will do so. "If it goes ahead, we will be prepared," says Steve Parkin, the company's European mar-

ket manager. About 95 per cent of all the vending machines sold in Britain are fitted with MEI coin boxes. These electronic "brains", as Steve Green, the company's marketing manager, calls them, have become increasingly proficient at rejecting coins that fail to measure up and supplying customers with change.

Effective, but by no means infallible. "It would be wrong to suggest that we have yet been able to develop a system

'Switching to the new British coins will cost the industry £27 million'

and the Royal Mint to discuss the introduction of the new British coins. These were (and are) seen as a "dry run" for the introduction of the euro, due to go into production this summer regardless of which countries are prepared to meet the political deadline.

The European Vending Association, the umbrella body for the various national associations, has lobbied for a one-year transition period but now accepts that six months is the



The new £2 coin, which goes into circulation on November 1, is seen as a dry run for the euro

Buy or lease your coffee-maker?

Stephen Hoare on what a company should know before it gets a vending machine

If an army moves on its stomach, then a workforce thrives on cups of coffee. Mainly leased by employers, Britain's 330,000 vending machines dispense 10 million hot drinks a year - 80 per cent of them coffee - and a fair bit of confectionery.

Janette Gledhill, director of AVAB, says: "It's a £1 billion consumer spend through the slot."

With so much at stake, businesses are getting choosy about their vending machines

and are demanding value for money and the trend is towards branded drinks.

Keith Tuson, managing director of contract operator VendePac, says: "People are finding anonymous coffee less and less acceptable. The majority of drinks being sold through vending machines are now branded."

Part of the reason for this is the boom in vending machines in leisure clubs and public buildings. Mainly, these sell branded products for 40p a

cup, compared with 15-20p in the workplace.

Contract operators such as VendePac and ProVend will supply a machine and a service contract. Not tied to a particular manufacturer, they will find a make and model of machine to suit customers' needs.

Operators rarely make anything on the supply of a machine - their profit comes from a three to five-year operating contract. The contract is usually based on a weekly management fee of, say, £25 per machine, the cost of servicing the machine, and a variable charge according to the number of cups to cover the cost of ingredients.

Beware of operators offering a "cup plan". This is a leasing plan similar to a discounted practice by which photocopiers were leased on a minimum number of copies.

Clients charged on the basis of 1,000 cups a week regardless of quantity consumed could find themselves considerably overcharged, according to the contracts committee of the Automatic Vending Association of Britain, which outlawed the practice a year ago.

Should a company buy or lease? With leasing, the firm can set off all payments against corporation tax, whereas with a cash sale half the cost may be offset against tax with an annual sum built in to the accounts for depreciation.

Mr Tuson says: "It depends on individual circumstances, but over a five-year contract I'd say the balance is just in

favour of cash. Holding cash reserves is not going to earn much interest so companies might as well buy. But having said that, leasing is still usual."

If a customer decides to go for leasing, a contract operator will introduce him to a leasing company who will finance the purchase of a machine - someone such as Lloyds Bowmaker, BZW, or Anglo Finance.

It is part of AVAB code to deal only with companies who are members of the Finance

'High volume makes a machine work better'

Leasing Association (FLA).

Dealing directly with the customer, the leasing company will take the risk and finance the machine over a set period. Usually the contract operator's service contract for the machine will be arranged over the same period, with a three or five-year lease mirrored by a three or five-year

contract.

The 320 member companies - which include machine manufacturers, distributors, commodity manufacturers and contract operators - work to a code of ethics. If a company is not happy with the service then it can call in the AVAB mediator.

Ms Gledhill says: "We make sure the operator complies with its contract.

"If they fall short they face sanctions, which in the worst case could result in expulsion from the association."

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Liability for making fire worse

Capital and Counties plc and Another v Hampshire County Council
John Munroe (Acrylics) Ltd v London Fire and Civil Defence Authority and Others
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Great Britain) v West Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority
 Before Lord Justice Stuart Smith, Lord Justice Potter and Lord Justice Judge
 [Judgment March 14]

A fire brigade was not under a common law duty to answer a call for help or take care to do so, but a plaintiff could recover against the brigade for its negligence in creating a danger which caused the plaintiff's injury.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment dismissing three appeals: (i) by the defendant, Hampshire County Council, from the decision of Judge Richard Hawley, QC (*The Times* April 26, 1996; [1996] 1 WLR 1553), sitting on official referees' business, in favour of the plaintiffs, Capital and Counties plc and Digital Equipment Co Ltd; (ii) by the plaintiff, John Munroe (Acrylics) Ltd, from the decision of M Justice Roughtier (*The Times* April 22, 1996; [1996] 3 WLR 289), in favour of the first defendant, London Fire Brigade and Civil Defence Authority; (iii) by the plaintiff, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Great Britain), from a decision of Judge Crawford, QC (*The Times* May 9, 1996), sitting as a judge of the High Court, in favour of the defendant, West Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority.

Mr James Munby, QC and Mr Edward Faulks, QC, for Hampshire: Mr John Stater, QC, Mr

Simon Brown, QC and Mr Alexander Antelme for Capital and Counties; Mr Jonathan Sumpson, QC and Mr Nigel Tozer for Digital, Mr Ronald Walker, QC and Mr Tony Hooper for John Munroe; Mr Michael De Navarro, QC, Mr Graham Elund and Mr Neil Hext for London Fire Brigade and Civil Defence Authority; Mr Anthony Boswood, QC and Mr Bruce Speller for The Church of Jesus Christ; Mr Colin Mackay, QC and Mr Jonathan Bellamy for West Yorkshire Fire and Civil Defence Authority.

Lord JUSTICE STUART SMITH, giving the judgment of the court, said that by an order dated December 17, 1996, Lord Justice Judge ordered that the appeals should be consolidated and argued together because they raised similar questions of law, in particular whether and in what circumstances a fire brigade owed a duty of care to the owner or occupier of premises which were damaged or destroyed by fire.

In the first case Capital were the defendant and head lessees of the Crescent, in Basingstoke, Hampshire. Between 1989 and 1990 the fire, on March 6, 1990, caused a wide area of small fire to break out. Some of the debris was scattered to the plaintiff's premises.

Later that evening a fire broke

out at the plaintiff's premises, which were severely damaged.

The plaintiff issued a writ against the fire authority alleging negligence by their servants or agents. The judge, in a preliminary issue whether the fire brigade owed any duty of care to the plaintiff, held that the fire brigade was bound to satisfy themselves that all fires had been extinguished and that there was no residual danger and they left the scene without inspecting the plaintiff's premises.

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The section 13 of the Fire Services Act 1947

provides: "A fire brigade shall take all reasonable measures for ensuring the provision of an adequate supply of water, and for securing that it will be available for use, in case of fire."

The section was not intended to confer a right of private action upon a member of the public. The duty propounded in the section was more in the nature of a general administrative function of procurement placed on the fire authority in relation to supply of water for firefighting generally. Therefore no action lay for breach of statutory duty under the section.

In the event all the appeals

were dismissed.

Solicitors: Mr Peter Robertson, Winchster; Cameron, Markby Hewitt, Barlow, Lyde & Gilbert; Hextall, Erskine & Co; Mr S. J. F. Starling, Lambeth; Devonshires; Davies Arnold Cooper.

It was alleged in the statement of claim that it was not until some time after arrival that the brigade was able to fight the fire, owing to the absence of a proper supply of water. The plaintiff's claim was based on negligence and in breach of statutory duty under

the section 13 of the Fire Services Act 1947.

Disabling the sprinklers had an adverse effect on the restraining of the fire and led to its going out of control. The building was a total

Book price protection withdrawn

In re Net Book Agreement 1957 (M and N)
 Before Mr Justice Ferris, Mr Barry Colgate and Mr John King
 [Judgment March 3]

The Net Book Agreement, by which the prices of books subject to the Restrictive Practices Act were fixed, had become contrary to the public interest. Resale price maintenance for books could no longer be upheld.

The Restrictive Practices Court so held discharging on the application of the Director General of Fair Trading under section 4 of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1976 and section 17 of the Resale Prices Act to discharge its previous orders and to declare that the restriction accepted under the Net Book Agreement was contrary to the public interest and to refuse to declare that books and maps were exempted goods for the purposes of legislation on resale price maintenance. The court's jurisdiction to review and, if appropriate, reverse its own previous and apparently final orders was subject to carefully expressed limitations.

His Lordship had considered preliminary questions of law pursuant to section 7(1) of the Restrictive Practices Court Act 1976 and a judgment on December 20, 1996 (unreported) had held that applications under sections 4 and 17 both involved two stages.

At the first stage the issue was whether there had indeed been a material change in relevant circumstances. At that stage the burden of proof lay upon the applicant, in this case the director general.

If the court was not satisfied, at the first stage, that there had been a material change in relevant circumstances it would inquire no further. If, however, the court was satisfied of that matter it would proceed to the second stage.

That required consideration of

whether, in the circumstances existing at the time of the new hearing, (i) the restriction accepted under the Net Book Agreement was or was not in the public interest having regard to section 10 of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act; and (ii) books and maps ought to be exempted goods for the purposes of the Resale Prices Act having regard to section 14 of that Act.

At that second stage the burden of satisfying the court lay upon those who contended that the restriction was not contrary to the public interest or that the goods should be exempted goods, in this case the respondents.

The court was satisfied that there had been changes in relevant circumstances since the previous orders were made. The most striking change which had occurred was the collapse of the Net Book Agreement.

None of the seven major publishing groups (Reed, Pearson, Harper Collins, Random House, Transworld, Macmillan and Hodder Headline) now published at net prices.

The court was not satisfied on the evidence that the abrogation of the Net Book Agreement would now or in the long run result in any of those consequences. None of the conditions specified in any of the "gateways" in section 14 of the Resale Prices Act, which would have justified continued resale price maintenance, were now satisfied.

The previous orders were discharged.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor.

Creditor bound

In re a Debtor (No 47 of 1996)

A creditor who had voted on a proposal for an individual voluntary arrangement at a creditor's meeting could not be bound by a subsequently held meeting, subsequently claiming that a part of his debt was not ascertained at the date of the meeting, and had not been included in the figure he stated was owed, and that he had therefore not voted in respect of that unascertained part.

Mr Edward Nugee, QC, sitting as a deputy judge in the Chancery Division, so held in a reserved judgment on March 3, on an application by the Commissioners of Customs and Excise for directions under section 263(3) of the Insolvency Act 1986.

His LORDSHIP said that it was inconsiderate on a creditor who wished to vote in respect of his debt to state to the best of his ability that

total amount that was owing to him, and, if the value of his debt or of some part of it was not ascertained, to state that fact and to supply the chairman of the meeting with as much information as was available to enable the chairman to put an estimated minimum value to it.

Applying the reasoning of Mr Justice Know in *In re Cancil Ltd* ([1996] 1 All ER 37), in his Lordship's judgment, it did not lie in the mouth of a creditor who had put a figure on his debt, albeit one that was stated to be subject to verification, to claim later that he was owed some other debt which he had not included in the figure he had stated and in respect of which he had not voted, and that he was therefore not bound in respect of that other debt, thereby enabling the voluntary arrangement to be frustrated.

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Applying the reasoning of Mr Justice



■ THEATRE 1
Wilde thing:
Simon Callow
reveals his
versatility in
*The Importance
of Being Oscar*



■ THEATRE 2
Poe-faced: *The
Fall of the
House of
Usherettes* gives
a farcical twist
to a famous tale

THE TIMES
ARTS



■ CHOICE 1
Ben Elton's
Hollywood satire,
Popcorn, comes
to the West End
VENUE: Now in preview
at the Apollo



■ CHOICE 2
Dawn French is
among the cast
of a new revue,
Then Again...
VENUE: Now in preview,
Lyric, Hammersmith

THEATRE: Fine revival of MacLiammoir's Wilde tribute; multimedia madness; unsexy erotica

Everything but callow

This could have been an evening of incense and high devotion. After all, Simon Callow tells us in the programme that he has adored Oscar Wilde since he was 13 and, as he was revealing in these pages a few days ago, he got to know and admire Michael MacLiammoir at the time his hair was turning lacquer-black from advancing age.

But Callow's delivery of the tribute to Wilde that the Irish actor started

The Importance of Being Oscar Savoy

touring round the world in 1960 strikes me as exemplary: unsentimental, lucid, lively, absorbing.

Callow steps on to a stage furnished with cream chairs, tables and books, wearing a dark purple suit and an open-necked white shirt above which a grey-beard bush is neatly curled. He looks less like Wilde than a younger Paul Scofield playing a distinguished variety of plum.

But then *The Importance of Being Oscar* does not follow current fashion, for it is couched in the third person, not the first. Only when Callow launches into *De Profundis* and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* are we meant to feel we are hearing Wilde himself, instead of listening to his story and extracts from his works.

For me, that letter and that poem were the high, or maybe the deep, points of the evening at the Savoy

THE TITLE is terrific, and just right for Forkbeard Fantasy's weird creative style in which live action is spliced with film, in this case to tell the nonsensical tale of Roderick de Usherette and his sisters, the offspring of a pioneer film-maker, whose secret they guard in the vaults of an ancient cinema.

Several sequences are daft enough or deft enough to raise an appreciative smile, but forbearance is needed to pass through the intervening stuff, which relies on audience tolerance of a peculiarly British style the apparently amateurish. Eccentric but nimble artists want to suggest they are achieving their effects against all odds and only just succeeding.

Peculiar mechanical effects are generally part of the enterprise, and are provided in *Usherettes* by the impressive fate of the great catatards on either side of the screen, Gog and Mrs Gog, and the elevation of the screen itself. It

Schlocky horror show

The Fall of the House of Usherettes

Lyric, Hammersmith

is a joyfully absurd moment when the grim sisters pump air into a long tube and the screen takes shape like a silvery mantis ray rising from the abyss.

Deep in the vaults of the Empire Cinema, lone surviving building in an abandoned city, lie vats of liquid film. The properties of this wonder-material are never precisely shared with us, but it enables movies to be stored in bottles and can trap people in loops of film where they endlessly

run down the same corridor and are hit on the head.

The founders of Forkbeard, Chris and Tim Britton, have developed the art of darting behind a screen on the stage and into a previously shot film. A live actor will carry on an argument with someone in the film, even with himself, which happens a lot in *Usherettes* because three actors play five characters.

Britton plays Earlobe, a tomb-robber from the National Film Archive, Britton C is the dithering Roderick, and together with Ed Sobol they play the three Usherette sisters, crones with hairstyles like burnt cottage loaves.

The cartoon sequences are ingenious, as is the joke of a rotating projecting room. The sets and general design (by Penny Saunders) make clutter an art form, and John Telfer's direction presumably added elements of cohesion to the general lunacy.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Lust loses its lustre

Raw Women and Cooked Men

Croydon Warehouse

MUSIC pounds and six beginner, beauty-spotted creatures in crumpled brocade and imitation silk preen and strut for us. The three men and three women look like degenerate Harlequins and Columbines. Suddenly the music stops and these exotic creatures turn back into the rococo eroticism of Croydon on a Thursday night.

Under the direction of Firenze Guidi, the young Italian director, the company explore the theme of seduction — but the piece is a teasing collection of nibbles rather than a fully satisfying, rigorous exploration. Furtively lit by bedside lamps, the performers voice

their desires for each other, their extended metaphors becoming sillier and sillier.

The problem with all this is that other people's generalised desire is banal in the telling, and quoting chunks of Roland Barthes's *Fragments of a Lover's Discourse* cannot disguise the fact. Various tableau ensue, and the performers play with the boundaries between a base, contemporary expression of lust and a more highfalutin aesthetic.

Each of the performers has physical skills, and David Murray stands out as an authentically unsettling figure. But while the constant return to the ridiculous sides of human sexuality undercut pretentiousness, it seems an error to seriously produce a meditation on desire which cannot take desire itself seriously.

CLARE BAYLEY



WILLIAM JERVIS • 37
IN PLASTER BY RICHARD HAMILTON

what that fine, flexible voice of his can do.

Actually, he is not a terrific Lady Bracknell — she sounds thin and shrill, not solid and formidable — but he does bring Jack Worthing, Algry and Algry's sepulchral butler and grumpy father enjoyably to life. He also leaves you

shivering at Dorian Gray's last-gasp transformation into a raddled, withered monster. Those who enter the Savoy thinking there's only one Callow will leave knowing there are several.

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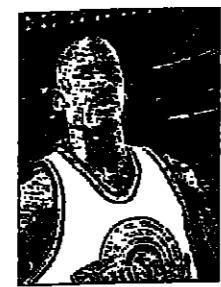
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Actually, he is not a terrific

■ FILM 1

Topped up with more special effects, *Star Wars* returns to work its naive enchantment again



■ FILM 2

Basketball star Michael Jordan meets a bunch of cartoon characters: it adds up to the inane *Space Jam*

THE TIMES ARTS

■ FILM 3

Richard Harris and Stephen Rea deliver *Billy Roche's* fine script with panache in *Trojan Eddie*

■ TOMORROW

Pop on Friday has an interview with fast-rising Mindy McReady, and reviews of all the top new albums

CINEMA: Geoff Brown on *Star Wars*, repackaged for a whole new buying public

"FAST, FUNNY, ENTERTAINING AND THOROUGHLY ENJOYABLE"



- Darren Bignell, EMPIRE

"YOU'LL LOVE THIS. IT'S FAR OUT MAN"

- BIG MAGAZINE

"GOOD FUN, AMUSING AND VERY CLEVERLY DONE"

- Barry Norman, BBC FILM '97

"THIS IS HUGE FUN"

- Colin Kennedy, SMASH HITS



Thanks to the miracle of computer imagery, Jabba the Hutt leaps from the third of the *Star Wars* trilogy to the first. Harrison Ford is unimpressed

Sales force is with us

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, Harrison Ford was considered sexy. He sported blow-dried hair, a teasingly unbuttoned shirt, and an unlined face that actually smiled. A long time ago robots resembled household appliances — a vacuum cleaner crossed, say, with a washing machine — and were benign enough to be affectionately called "that malfunctioning little twerp". Mark Hamill defended the universe with a Californian surfer's shaggy mane and bubblegum brain, while Carrie Fisher, deposed princess of a galactic republic, appeared to wear bagels on the sides of her head.

None of the above has changed in *Star Wars*, the Special Edition. George Lucas may have used digital technology to erase imperfections and add new footage, but the bulk of this movie milestone looks the same as it always did, dotty hairstyles and all. In 1977, *Star Wars* ran for 121 minutes. Now it runs for 125, and the value of those extra minutes lies far more in their use as a marketing hook than in any artistic achievement.

What has changed, of course, is the way we ourselves perceive the space adventures of Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Princess Leia and the other creatures of Lucas's imagination. Twenty years ago, Lucas was creating a new kind of spectacle that viewed old-style Saturday morning serial thrills through sophisticated adult eyes. He created a cinema of deliberate naivety, and helped to establish the fashion for high-speed blockbuster movies dominated more by special effects than actors' flesh and blood.

But there is still an enormous gulf between then and now. Compared to the films it spawned, *Star Wars* appears gleamingly clean and wholesome. No slobbering, pulsating mutants hog the screen:

even the most villainous characters, such as Peter Cushing's Grand Moff Tarkin and his sidekick, Darth Vader, are tidily dressed. There is an old-fashioned concern for morality, for the rights and wrongs of capturing a planet and establishing an evil empire. Current Hollywood films are more concerned with the vigourous, and the glorification of revenge.

What modern special effects bonanza would embrace a quasi-religious concept like "the Force", the spirit that guided the space knights of old before the imperial forces exerted their grip? There is no room in *Independence Day* for a guru such as Alec Guinness's Obi-Wan Kenobi, who offers wise, twinkling words to Hamill's Skywalker. Now there are no wise words from anyone.

But *Star Wars* is still a film that can leave you twiddling your thumbs if your mind is not cocked at a certain angle. You must prepare to be a child again, or at least an arrested adolescent; otherwise, once the situation is set up and the battle lines drawn, monotony might set in so fiercely that no number of laser-beam duels, strafing spaceships and exploding planets will rouse you.

But what of the new or doctored footage? The space port of Mos Eisley, previously as bustling as Market Harborough, now boasts extra buildings and eccentric citizens such as the Ronto, a towering, lolling, scaly creature hidden like a camel. Ford's Han Solo, the mercenary pilot hired to help Skywalker's mission, shares a redundant, computer-generated scene with the slug-like Jabba the Hutt (previously seen as a rubber puppet in *Return of the Jedi*). Spaceships and smaller vehicles move more quickly.

In themselves, none of these "improvements" matter: the movie, essentially, is still as it was. But there is something ominous in the spectacle of Lucas, who has not personally directed a film since *Star Wars*, going back over his biggest hit to tweak a few details with technicians. Lucas is now far more comfortable directing computers than he is directing human beings; one suspects he is only directing *The Balance of the Force*, the new *Star Wars* prequel shooting this autumn, because it will rely heavily on computer-generated effects.

But there is still an enormous gulf between then and now. Compared to the films it spawned, *Star Wars* appears gleamingly clean and wholesome. No slobbering, pulsating mutants hog the screen:

Star Wars
Odeon Leicester Square
U, 125 mins
New edition of the movie milestone
Space Jam
Warner West End
U, 87 mins
Sports Michael Jordan meets Bugs Bunny
Trojan Eddie
Metro, 15, 105 mins
Flavourful tale of Irish scamps

spectacle of Tweety-Pie flicked with a finger against a gym wall. But *Space Jam* is less a movie than a triumph of merchandise and consumer marketing.

If you want to see human beings on the screen, *Trojan Eddie* is by far your best bet this week. They are a lively bunch: small-time Irish criminals, housewives, travellers, wily youngsters, plus one vicious godfather running out of time. Richard Harris attacks that role with a bite and fire that no computer could ever simulate. His opposite number is Stephen Rea, an ex-con and hawker of dubious goods in a small Irish town, dreaming of setting up his own business and struggling to be free of Harris's influence.

The script is by Billy Roche, playwright of the Wexford Trilogy. At first he thrusts too

many characters at us; only once Harris gets married to Aislinn McCracken's young wife, and the new wife absconds with his own nephew, does the film begin to stabilise. But in this computer-generated week, it's a joy to meet such messy characters, trailing their flaws, banting and fighting, all with a genuine Irish flavour.

Scottish-born director Gillies MacKinnon adopts a less stylised approach than in his last film *Small Fates*. But he shows the same fondness for urban scamps, and against the odds makes Harris's vicious old brute a figure worth some sympathy. Rea and Harris prove a fascinating combination: the one full of snarling bluster, the other seeming to snap round his heels, but quietly manoeuvring for his own place in the sun.

COMPETITION THE TIMES

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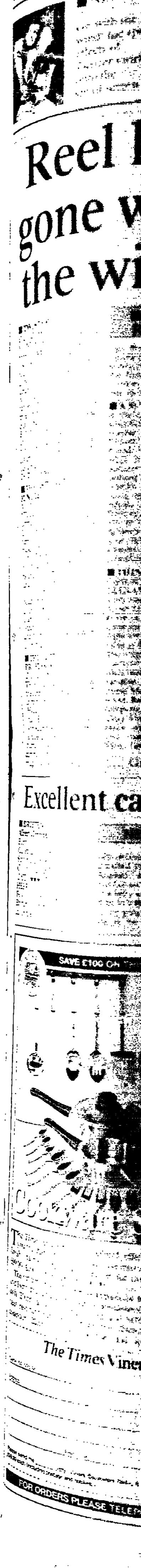
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a) £100 million b) £112 million c) £150 million

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CHANGING TIMES



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Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases ...

STAR WARS

Tim Thornton, 21: An unconvincing piece of bombast that's unlikely to catch on.

Claire Wilmet, 18: Fantastic fun, but not nearly as frightening as I remembered it.

Damian Samuels, 19: One of cinema's all-time greats.

Leslie Thomas, 18: Its impact on me is as great as when I was younger. Totally fab.

SPACE JAM

Tim: Not really exciting, but with a certain charm.

Claire: See it only if the other films at your cinema are fully booked.

Damian: Richard Harris does what he does best: being moody, drunk and Gaelic.

Leslie: Worth seeing just for the brilliant Bill Murray.

SNAP VERDICT

Leslie: A kicking soundtrack and eye-popping animation.

TROJAN EDDIE

Tim: Not really exciting, but with a certain charm.

Claire: See it only if the other films at your cinema are fully booked.

Damian: Richard Harris does what he does best: being moody, drunk and Gaelic.

Leslie: Well-plotted with a wicked ending.

Faced with acting alongside cartoon figures, Jordan performs creditably. You can wring perverse fun from isolated details, such as the



The Times Viner

FOR ORDERS PLEASE TELE

Roger Bannister on the vanishing all-rounder

Century, home run or hole-in-one: it's all sport on the brain

The "Michael" of the title is the world's greatest basketball player Michael Jordan who, born with many years of effortless superiority, tried at the age of 31 to switch to baseball and failed. His enormous sporting skills were just not transferable. This book, an eclectic mixture of sporting history, anecdote and neurology, should fascinate even readers with only a glancing interest in sport, analysing as it does the acquisition and disintegration of high sporting skills.

The Michael Jordan problem illustrates one of the quintessential fascinations of sport — why, suddenly among sporting stars, there arises a superstar of banting brilliance. The fact that Michael Jordan could not switch sports also illustrates a second semiinal sporting question — why are all-rounders a vanishing breed? Are some athletes genetically programmed to have exceptional trainable skills, in particular in perceiving the speed and direction of moving balls they catch and hit?

Liam Botham, son of one of our great all-rounders, recently refused national cricket trials because he prefers rugby and seems just as good at it. The Cowdrays keep cricket in the family the way others keep the family silver. At the royal end of sport, the Princess Royal's son, with sporting genes from both sides, may well play rugby for Scotland.

I believe the main reason for the disappearance of the all-rounder is that sporting standards are now so high and specific training so rough and lengthy, that there is no time left to develop wider sporting skills. The current lack of coaching for competitive sports in so many schools does not help the situation.

This book tells the story of the great American all-rounder Babe Didrikson, who won women's Olympic medals for jumping and throwing events before she even turned her attention to golf — at which she was the world's best. At present Britain has the world's best woman golfer in Laura Davies. She repeatedly outdrove Tom Watson, who dominated golf worldwide in the 1970s and 1980s. Could she have become as great an all-rounder as Babe Didrikson? One of the delights of sport is such speculation.

Some sporting problems are simply mechanical. The human shoulder is ill-adapted to throwing a baseball at a hundred miles per hour. The Pitcher Bruce Sutter trapped his supraspinatus nerve and J. R. Richard, another pitcher, blocked his brachial artery. Sometimes athletes will have incidental neurological diseases and in these cases Dr Klawans gives us useful tutorials. Myasthenia causes fatigue on hard exercise, which is why Dwight Jameson was nicknamed "First-Half Jameson".

WHY MICHAEL COULDNT HIT
And Other Tales of the Neurology of Sports
By Harold L. Klawans
W.H. Freeman, \$29.95
ISBN 0716730014

involuntary jerk known as the "yips". As a left-handed boy he was too poor to buy left-handed clubs so he had to play right-handed. Since the game is said to require subordination of the normally dominant hand, this might have helped his swing up to a point, but did the strain of the transfer make him more vulnerable to breakdown?

I am puzzled and indeed slightly embarrassed to find myself included in this book rather as a grace note because I happen to be a neurologist with a past in sport. In public I will admit to a degree of obsessiveness desirable in sport and also, I may add, to Dr Klawans's prerequisite for a neurological career!

Dr Klawans's selection is mainly American but his examples can be transferred to Britain. Sporting stress can now subject to more precise observation than the famous remark by the American coach, Yogi Berra: "Baseball is 90 per cent mental and the other half is physical."

There are other books to be written on the neurology of sport but this is a very good start. The serious message of the book is that all learning is complex and difficult, and the moment to learn differs for each activity and must be exploited easily for success. Dr Klawans is to be congratulated. I hope his love of neurology does not dampen his ardour for writing.

Sir Roger Bannister is Honorary Consultant Neurologist to the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery, Queen Square, and St Mary's Hospital, London.

A version of this review appeared in *Nature Medicine* and has been reprinted with the permission of the publisher.

AP/BILL INGRAM



Low batting average: Jordan's skills were not transferable

Moderation his muse

Peter Stothard on the varied gifts of a poet who combined earth and empire

To say that there is bad blood in the veins of the Royal Family has been fashionable for as long as we have had a monarchy. To link the idea to a 2,000-year-old poem about witches who chop up children to make sex stimulants takes a special imagination. Peter Levi's discussion of Horace's "evil" fifth *Epoche* ranges from Latin-speaking cockerels in the years before Horace was born to the character of Rimini more than a thousand years later: a "stronghold of the Sforza family whose disastrous blood ran in the British monarchy through Henrietta Maria".

Levi goes off at tangents with the eagerness that ordinary biographers seek birth certificates. He once wrote a biography of Lear: so we see Roman Italy through Lear's eyes. A man who can compare Horace's work to "a poem I wrote many years ago for the television series *That Was the Week That Was*" is not one who treads the narrow route to respect.

Horace was one of the most extraordinary artists to have ever lived. By marrying the young Latin language to classical Greek morality and metre, he became one of the true

HORACE
A Life
By Peter Levi
Duckworth £25
ISBN 0750 275 4



One face of a multifaceted poet: early 16th-century fresco of Horace in the Cappella Nuova at Orvieto

founders of Europe. He was the first poet to produce a precise description of an identifiable place; his five-word description of *Terracina* (*Satires* 1.526) merits a place in any writer's commonplace book. His sixth *Satire* is a pioneering act of self-portraiture. His ability to weave philosophy and poetry had never been matched before and has only rarely been seen since.

He also happened to fight in one of history's decisive battles, at Philippi in 42 BC, when his future patron and founder of the Roman Empire defeated the assassins of Julius Caesar. With a poet's special sense of military matters, he fought on the losing side. If any ancient figure merits a fresh biography for each new generation (as current publishing practice seems to demand) it is Horace.

Levi can add nothing to the biographical facts of life. Quintus Horatius Flaccus was born in 65 BC on what would have been December 8 if the Romans had been calculating the date as we do. His birthplace was Venusia, just north of Naples. His father was a freed slave who became wealthy enough to educate his son at Rome and in Athens. In Greece he met Brutus and made his military debut. He then found himself a clerk's job with the winning side before attracting the attention of Augustus's hagman, Maecenas, and later of the Emperor himself.

Subsequently, Horace settled down to a poet's life in Rome and on his Sabine farm, breaking new literary ground and giving succour to the regime that gave him the peace to do so. This much is more or less agreed.

Beyond that, however, Horace has many faces. The first has been familiar to schoolboys for centuries. This is the jolly countryman Horace who likes a good drink, a compliant

sexual companion and a philosophy of nothing in excess. The harsher urban poems of child-murder, polluted cemeteries and prostitute hags are, according to this view, as atypical as they are unsavory.

This Horace has always been an Englishman. As Levi relates, it was Milton's friend, Lucas Holstein, who first "identified" the site of the Sabine farm; the consequent crowds of English visitors left locals in no doubt that a great foreign poet had once lived among them.

The second Horace belongs to the inspirational German scholar and refugee, Eduard Fraenkel. This is the noble Horace who defined one of the greatest statesmen in history. Fraenkel's favourite Horatian ode was not a paean to Pyrrha, as favoured by Milton, or an epicurean comment upon the passing of winter, but a letter of loyalty to Augustus. His students in Oxford in the Seventies used it to seem odd that a man who had fled the tyranny of Hitler should be so enthusiastic about the tyrannophile aspects of Horace. But

Fraenkel had no problem with authority as such — as long as the authority was his own.

The third Horace, a sensitive thinker and delicate adapter of Sappho and Alceus, is less an Italian admirer of Mussolini, more a Greek partisan in Italian garb. Classical students may still read Fraenkel's *Horace* (and some of us still recall in the memory of his seminars) but the modern tutor prefers softer voices.

Which face of Horace does Levi show us? Not a very clear one. He admires Fraenkel and follows his reluctance to admire Horace's earthy work. Neither feels comfortable that the great philosophical doctrine of the "golden mean" should be applied to a safe sexual path avoiding married women and whores; in all such disagreeable cases Horace is said to be reworking well-worn themes. Levi is an enthusiastic censor, happy to say that a poem in Horace's Latin is "more amusing and less decorous than I have made it".

Levi is a powerful poet himself but an underpowered critic and haphazard writer of a life story. He makes a balanced case for the now less fashionable political poems. In the early Roman Empire both military power and moral poetry had a force that had never been felt before. Levi shows how Horace was central to that achievement, how he was not a mere propagandist for Augustus but helped to define what Augustus became: "He was both mimesis and one of the mimesists."

This book is otherwise chiefly memorable for its tangents, its unexpected references to its author. Not

every reader of the *Odes* knows that bears prowl about moaning and groaning when they are hungry or that the Egyptian cobra's bite would have been painless for Cleopatra. But Levi explains how he has spoken to the Canadian bear expert, Professor John North of Waterloo; and that he learnt about the cobra from the great A. S. F. Gow, "a very old boyfriend of A. E. Housman who survived at Trinity Cambridge into my day".

Novelty and the ghosts of the great

Robert Nye

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Edited by A. S. Byatt and Peter Porter
Vintage, £7.99
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Edited by Colm Tóibín
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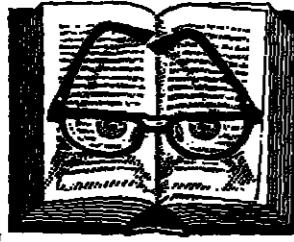
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Higher learning — and lower

"I HATE racism in all its manifestations and will not tolerate its expression from the most eminent of historians — especially from them," writes Francis Jennings, author, in *Benjamin Franklin, Politician*, immediately after his delicate summing up of the effect of the work of others: "The Quakers became in image what crude bigots call 'nigger lovers'."

Jennings — whose dull, intermining book is only tangentially about Franklin — is director emeritus of the Newberry Library Center for the History of the American Indian, so racial questions presumably loom large for him, as for all American academics, who are professionally obliged to share his intolerance.

It is surprising to read the opening to his Chapter 8: "No one in a responsible position [in colonial Pennsylvania] could have escaped concern about the tide of immigrant Germans..." [Franklin wrote: "This will in a few years become a German Colony: Instead of their Learning our Language, we must learn their's or live as in a foreign Country."] For "Germans" in the first sentence, substitute "blacks" or "Jews", and the effect is explosive. And in parts of present-day America the question of which is to be the first language is again a live one. So here is a pledged



anti-racist saying that responsible people should legitimately be concerned about their own cultures. Common sense. But did he mean it?

I WALK and I bark. South Bank University, Borough Road, SE1: "Student's Entrance". Discussing the idea that there is only one student, I conclude that no one at this seat of learning has ever noticed, or that no one knows.

Yes, I am a pedant. Why does it matter more than the shop at the end of the road offering Roll's and Bap's?

It matters because it announces that the place doesn't care about what Housman called "the maintenance of accurate learning". But I want these places to shake off the *Private Eye* image of "the University of Scotch Corner, formerly World of Carpets". I want to be persuaded that my taxes are being spent on recognisable education. I want to know that students reading for degrees can read.

It matters for the reasons William James put forward in 1908, when he argued that higher education is about cultivating a critical sense, "the admiration of the really admirable, the disesteem of what is cheap and trashy and impermanent". Ultimately, he argued, higher education should "enable us to know a good man when we see him". He went on: "That the phrase is anything but an empty epigram follows from the fact that if you ask in what line it is most important that a democracy like ours should have its sons and daughters skilful, you see that it is in this line more than any other."

We need to educate people to appreciate quality, and we are not doing it well. And incidentally, when will St Thomas' Hospital find its missing "s"?

JIM MCCUE

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A gripping saga of great passion'

THE TIMES

Derwent May sweeps through Arthur Ransome's letters and finds adventures worthy of the classic children's writer

Swallows and Marxists

Thirteen years ago, Hugh Brogan brought out an excellent biography of the children's writer, Arthur Ransome. Now he has produced a volume of Ransome's letters that bring this genial, ebullient man to life again.

When the letters begin, in August 1914, Ransome is 30. He has gone to Russia, to look for folk tales that he can turn into a book — and to get away from an impossibly unhappy marriage. His unhappiness fades very quickly, and in the first days of the Great War he writes enthusiastically to his mother about the Russians. It is clear at once what a natural, vivid writer he is:

"You know how our soldiers go off in pomp with flags and music. I have not heard a note of music since the declaration of war. They go off here quite silently in the middle of the night, carrying their little kettles, and for all the world like puzzled children going to school for the first time. And the idea in all their heads is fine. We hate fighting. But if we can stop Germany then there will be peace for ever."

He was destined to stay in Russia, or near by in Finland, Sweden or Estonia, for the next ten years. He became a foreign correspondent for *The Daily News* and then *The*

SIGNALLING FROM MARS
The Letters of Arthur Ransome
Selected and introduced by Hugh Brogan
Cape, £17.99
0 224 04261 0

Manchester Guardian, and went on writing brilliant accounts of the war and the Revolution in his letters home as well as in his telegrams to his editors. During these years he also fell in love with Trotsky's secretary, a fiery but deeply loyal woman called Evgenia Petrovna Shelepin, or "Topsy", as in *Topsy*, to Ransome — he was called "Charlie", as in *Chaplin*. After a painful divorce from his first wife, he married Genia in 1924.

He enjoyed those years abroad and the letters burst with his pleasures — watching the shifting icebergs in the harbour at Riga, with

and the fishermen deftly throwing nets between them; building his boat *Racundra* (the propeller of his tiny outboard engine like "a little brass flower" attached to its large hulls sailing to England. "Shedding articles into the post-boxes at all the harbours on the way".

In its early days he was also sympathetic to the Russian Revolution, and argued in *The Guardian* that British friendship towards the Soviets would steer the Revolution on to quite a different course. But

throughout these years he longed to return to the Lake District, where he had been so happy as a boy, and just

write stories. He finally got back

there with Genia in 1925 — and then dropped politics like a stone, and wrote stories, and hardly ever left the Lakes again.

It was genius to devise the story of *Swallows and Amazons* when he began his new writing career in 1929. Readers who love that book can see intimations of its themes running all through these letters. The four children who sail the *Swallow* in it are based closely on the children of an old boyhood sweetheart from the Lake District with whom he had remained friends, and the lake on which they have their adventures is partly Coniston and partly Windermere. He wrote

young writer friend that she must "follow her own internal compass", and that is what he did here. "He had found a way," says Brogan, "to do what he had always wanted to do, which was to write stories for children, while satisfying his own exacting literary standards."

The later life unfolded in these letters, as he went on writing book after book, is a very cheering reflection of the way that literary traditions can go on even though they are at odds with prevailing literary fashion. We are so used to thinking of Bloomsbury, the Auden friends and then Evelyn Waugh's world as embodying English "literary life" from the Twenties to the Fifties that it is startling to discover this other quite self-contained and contented literary set.

One letter reveals that Janet Adam Smith was questioning in *The Spectator* in 1943 "whether Mr Ransome's stories appeal to children who live entirely outside the world of nannies, cooks and private boat-houses". Ransome himself gives a robust answer to this early

specimen of a narrow political correctness: "Does she really think that none but birds can read Hans Andersen's *Ugly Duckling* and that it is necessary to be of the blood royal to enjoy *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*? I should be very sorry indeed to think that only children of one particular background can share the fun of open air doings, and the feelings that have been common to all young human beings from the beginning of time."

However, one child that Ransome did not understand was his daughter from his first marriage, Tabitha. He wrote her some wonderfully funny illustrated letters when she was small, but she clearly never forgave him for deserting her, and he remained bewildered and hurt by the cruel letters he received from her in later life. It is about the only really sad note in this book.

Brogan's notes to the letters could sometimes, I felt, have been a little more informative. But for anyone who wants to go on and read the full story of Arthur Ransome, it is good news that, according to the publishers, Brogan's biography and Ransome's autobiography are still in print.

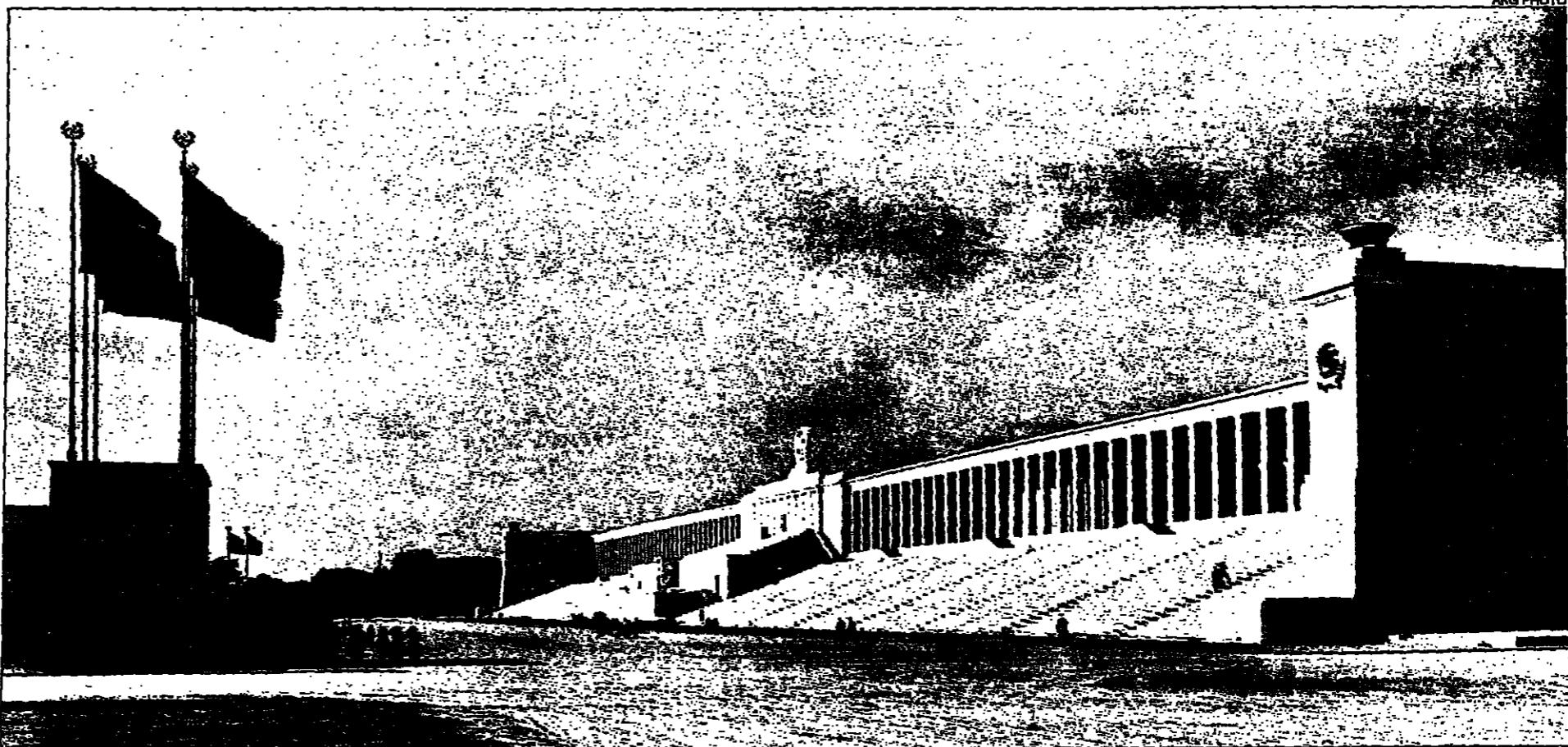
Knowledge of himself as he was

Dan van der Vat, who covered Germany as a journalist for *The Times*, has been a little unlucky. Two years ago, Gitta Sereny, another journalist, wrote a book about Albert Speer that won prizes. Speer had been an exceedingly powerful man in Hitler's Reich and, at the Nuremberg trials, was given a 20-year sentence as a war criminal. Beginning as an architect, he was put in charge, still in his thirties, of a gigantic project to rebuild Germany's capital city on megalomaniac lines; he built for Hitler an enormous chancellery, which was designed to strike dread into the breasts of foreign visitors if it did not strike dread, at least it could cause them some moments of slippery doubt as they trotted across the marble football field floor of the "study" to see Hitler. In the first two-and-a-half years of the war, these construction projects required great resources, which, of course, were withdrawn from the military effort. Early in 1942, Albert Speer was therefore put in charge of the munitions industry, as a way of making sure that he did not frustrate it. He did very well — increasing production remarkably, even though Germany came under deadly bombardment. Like Hjalmar Schacht, another technician of genius, Speer counted as Hitler's one of most effective henchmen, and, as such, he got his 20 years' sentence.

His own memoirs, ghost-written by another technician of genius, Joachim Fest, became a bestseller in the later Sixties, after his release. But the question always remained: how could Speer, a highly educated man with excellent manners, have gone along with the evil Nazi crew? How much did he know about the massacre of Jews and the crimes against humanity?

Dan van der Vat has gone into this question in a biography that complements Gitta Sereny's rather well. His great strength (apart from readability — anything to do with the Nazis can be exceedingly boring, as they were, but van der Vat does well) is that he takes Speer seriously as an architect (he does not like the stuff, but I would rather live in a Speer building than in most modern constructions; apart from anything else, those Thirties buildings were just more reliably constructed).

He also talks at length about Speer's achievements in war-production, which were indeed considerable. Van der Vat remarks felicitously that Germans manage to be both excellent organisers and rather inefficient; the same, if you judge by longer-term goals, was true of Speer, but van der Vat's account of his management of the German war economy is very good. How could the Germans produce so much more war goods in 1944, under heavy bombardments, than in 1943? "Flow methods" and conscript labour had a great deal to do with it. It was for the maltreatment of for-



Building on megalomaniac lines, designed to strike dread into the breasts of foreign visitors: the stadium, designed by Speer, that was the scene of the Nuremberg rallies

sign labour that Speer got his sentence.

The question that everyone was, how could Albert Speer reconcile his profession with his conscience? Why not join the Resistance? To this, the convict himself simply said that he accepted guilt in a general way, but he had not really known what was happening to the Jews in the death camps — at least, not until very late in the day. How could he live with that burden

Norman Stone

THE GOOD NAZI
The Life and Lies of Albert Speer
By Dan van der Vat
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20
ISBN 0 297 81213 3

of guilt, asked Gitta Sereny, who knew him quite well and wrote rather movingly about this. Van der Vat thinks that Speer was lying.

He himself had had a part in deporting Jews from Berlin, but he suppressed the documentary evidence and even tried to fool the German Federal Archive. He was found out because an old associate kept the record and made it public when Speer, as he often did with people, behaved treacherously towards him. That is the burden of van der Vat's book: Speer was not a good guy after all, but a calculating Nazi believer who was just much, much more adept at handling Allied justice than the thugs who were hanged.

I have a bone or two to pick — nothing serious, but why does an inexperienced writer such as van der Vat write

viveur, which means "rake", when he means *bon vivant* which means what it says? Agreed, Speer probably did know more about the massacre of the Jews than he let on. Forced labour, some of it Jewish, did live in dreadful conditions, not all of which were ascribable to Allied bombing. However, the Final Solution was executed in fits and starts, and although Speer would unquestionably have known about various atrocities, he could have been kept in the dark as to the amplitude of the whole thing. "Evasions" rather than "lies" would maybe be a more suitable word for the title.

I conducted the last interview that Speer ever did — it was for the BBC — and he died shortly afterwards. We had dinner the night before, and I found him quite open and remarkably lively about the Thirties in particular (he surprised me by not understanding the depth of difference that existed between Catholics and Protestants when it came to voting Nazi). The Catholics were much less likely Nazis. I had vaguely expected that Speer might merit Benjamin Constant's line *qui voudrait se cacher en se déguisant* but there was none of that. A very rum cover, and in the manner of his death, too — it was for an assignation that he had really come to London, and he had explained to a friend that he had had to wait until he was over 70 to know what an erotic experience really was. The lady telephoned the receptionist to say that the old man had had a stroke, and then the lady vanished. A rum end for a very enigmatic figure, whose memoirs are, nonetheless, part of European literature.

ALISTAIR McALPINE was an unlikely recruit to Margaret Thatcher's band of revolutionaries, for on the face of it he had all the qualifications to be a prime wet. Born wealthy thanks to the labours of his father and grandfather, he thought of his father's brickies as part of his extended family. He was an unashamed aesthete who collected everything from rag dolls to veterinary equipment. He had a grand house in Knightsbridge, complete with private cinema, and an even grander country house, West Green, not to mention homes in Australia and Venice.

In sixties he lived the life and held the sort of louche parties that Norman Tebbit now blames for the corruption of British society. He first slid into politics as an unthinking pro-European, raising money to fight for the Yes cause in the 1975 referendum. And yet, when the call came from Mrs Thatcher to serve, there he was, ready and eager. And there he remains, fighting her corner against the wimps, the traitors and appeasers.

WALTZING WITH MRS T

Nicholas Wapshot

ONCE A JOLLY BAGMAN
By Alistair McAlpine
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20
ISBN 0 297 81737 X

doings as those who posed as Thatchers and subsequently undid her. And he is fiercely loyal to her because by making him a joint Tory party treasurer she gave him something useful to do for the first time in his life. Although by that time 32 years of age, as he puts it, "I had never been offered a serious job before" and he remains grateful.

So woe betide anyone who mistreats his benefactor,

which, according to this galling account of the inside Mrs Finchley's bunker, includes many of her closest colleagues. And it is the traducing of his former muckers which makes this poisonous apologia such a joy to read.

Willie Whitelaw (who shored her up more than once) is condemned for hunting her; Geoffrey Howe (the architect of the caustic 1981 Budget) "irritated her beyond belief".

Tristan Garel-Jones was a viper,

Chris Patten greedy

with oysters (and thus from a trencherman whose gluttony led to a sextuple heart bypass). Then "the only part about the recession that was shallow and short was its cause — Norman Lamont".

But most despised of all is Jeffrey Archer. What can explain the passion behind this public garrotting? "The myth about Archer is that he was a member of Thatcher's court. The fact is that he was not. As for Archer's fundraising abilities, they were negligible."

And there's worse. "I only

hope, for the sake of Britain, that no politician, hearing only good of the man, mistakenly gives him again a job of any political consequence."

Major is dismissed as barely worth writing about. While this most clubbable of men, always ready for a breakfast or a lunch or a quick glass before dinner, condemns Major for assembling a "Cabinet of Chums", he takes at face value Mrs Thatcher's excuses for errors such as the poll tax, the Single European Act and her anointment of Major.

For all his closeness to herself, when it came to policy she ignored him. Like many a political reporter, he suffered from the delusion that being allowed to witness power at close quarters is a form of power itself. But as those he mugs in these pages will conclude, he would understand electoral politics a lot better if he had been elected to something. Anything. Instead he has taken a commission in Sir James's ragtag army.

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■ AIR UK has a spring sale. One-way flights to destinations such as Amsterdam, Paris, Düsseldorf and Edinburgh cost £55, one-way flights to Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Milan, Munich and Zurich £49. Book 14 days ahead and no later than April 6. Details: 0345 666777.

■ AER LINGUS has a £119 companion fare to Dublin with Cork and Shannon priced at £129. The price covers return travel for two people between April 7 and May 22. Details: 0181-569464.

■ ROYAL BRUNEI flights to Perth costs £545 when you book by March 31 and travel between April 15 and June 15. Details from Travelwood, 0171-259 0280.

HOLIDAYS

HALF-BOARD accommodation in Sorrento for a week at £249 a person is available from Page & Moy. Fly from Birmingham tomorrow. Details: 01653 628862.

■ EASTER in a villa overlooking Lake Orta in northern Italy is on offer at a discount from Lakes & Mountains Holidays. Priced from £122 a person a week, including Channel ferry crossing, and available from March 22 to April 5. Details: 01329 544405.

■ DISCOUNTED green fees are available for golfers staying at Some Special Villas in the Algarve. Price: £169 a person for a week over Easter (flights extra): £248 a person after Easter, with flights and car hire. Details: 01992 552231.

■ MALTA for a week's self-catering for £179 a person, with a flight from Manchester on April 3. Details: Going Places, 0541 555334.

■ HORSE-RIDING in Andalucia for a week, with a flight from Gatwick to Gibraltar on April 5, is on offer from



Seychelles beach hotel holidays for £699 a person for 12 nights in April are available from Tropical Places. Flights from Gatwick or Manchester. Details: 01342 825123.

NORBERT FRICK

THE NEW *Getaway Breaks* brochure from Best Western hotels details short-break stays at hundreds of British hotels starting from £31 a person a night. Details: 0181-541 0033.

■ EXECUTIVE travellers who join Regal Hotel's business-class corporate rates programme will get lower rates and a 10 per cent discount on other charges, such as food, beverages and phone calls. Details: 01635 527600.

■ FORTE Village in Sardinia is reopening at Easter with a three-night package from £300 a person, excluding flights. The package includes sports and spa activities. Details: 00 39 70921 516.

■ LATE EASTER availability at the Landmark Hotel, near Marylebone Station, London, means a £149-a-night room rate, with free valet parking, over the holiday weekend. Details: 0171-631 8000.

■ SUMMER packages from the Peninsular Hotels Group, available from June 15 until September 15, include a 20 per

HOTELS

cent discount on all suites. Hotels are in Hong Kong, Beijing, Manila, New York and Los Angeles. Reservations through Preferred Hotels. Details: 0800 893391.

■ THE special rate at the all-suite Conrad International Hotel at Chelsea Harbour, West London, from tomorrow until April 6 is £150 plus VAT and a 10 per cent discount on other charges, such as food, beverages and phone calls. Details: 0171-823 3000.

■ OAKLEY COURT Hotel, near Windsor, has a number of themed weekends, such as a two-night fishing break from £209 a person, or a visit to nearby Legoland from £146 a person for two nights, including theme park entry. Details: 01753 609958.

■ THE Drury Lane Moat House near Covent Garden in central London has a two-night offer until April 6 of £100 a person instead of the usual £155. Extra nights cost £50 a person. Offer available through Highlife Breaks. Details: 0800 700400.

FERRIES

SEA FRANCE has joined its Dover rivals in extending its advance-booking deals, offering any 1997 Calais return for £59, for bookings before March 31. Valid for a car and up to five passengers. Details: 0800 717171.

■ BRITTANY FERRIES has a new £59.95 fare for foot passengers to France, allowing up to 24 hours on shore. Cars cost an extra £10. Available until May 15, excluding Easter. Details: 0090 360360.

■ IRISH Ferries has cut daytime prices to £50 each way on its Pembroke-Rosslare route for a car and five passengers, until May 21 (excluding Easter). Night crossings cost £49. Details: 0345 171717.

■ SWANSEA Cork Ferries has a £155 midweek return, for a car and five adults, for travel by May 21 (excluding Easter). Details: 01792 456116.

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Travel show previews new British attractions

By TONY DAWE

THE FIRST glimpse of ambitious new tourist attractions expected to woo visitors in their millions could be seen yesterday as leaders of the British travel industry celebrated its new buoyancy.

The £15 million Centre for Popular Music in Sheffield and the £16 million National Glass Centre in Sunderland were previewed at the British Travel Trade Fair at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham.

The projects reflect the vast amount of investment being ploughed into tourism, much of it coming from National Lottery funds. More than 500 exhibitors are displaying their attractions, including Aton Towers, which unveiled its latest white-knuckle ride called Ripsaw, and Wedgwood, which plans a new Visitor Experience for next year.

Several exhibitors showed plans for millennium projects, among them the £112 million Portsmouth Harbour scheme which will provide the city with waterfront museums and attractions, and the £34 million Earth Centre in the Dearne Valley of South Yorkshire.

Scores of tourist boards are also taking part, including Bronte Country Tourism, which yesterday launched plans for Great British Literary Tours, and Worthing council, which revealed details of a Victorian Seaside Festival this August.

They are all attempting to impress the thousands of tour operators, many from overseas, who are visiting the fair, which continues today. Fiona Jeffery, the exhibition director, said: "Anyone seeking inspiration for tours anywhere in Britain will be impressed by the wide range of upgraded products and the new visitor attractions planned for the next few years."

The variety of attractions underline the continued growth of tourism, one of Bri-

tain's booming industries. Latest figures from the International Passenger Survey show that the number of overseas visits to Britain increased to 26 million last year, a rise of 8 per cent. Domestic tourism is also growing: the number of trips this year is expected to increase by between 2 and 3 per cent.

While London, York and Stratford-upon-Avon continue to attract the bulk of overseas tourists and the West Country remains the favourite destination for British travellers, leaders of the travel industry in Scotland and Wales also report increases in the number of visitors.

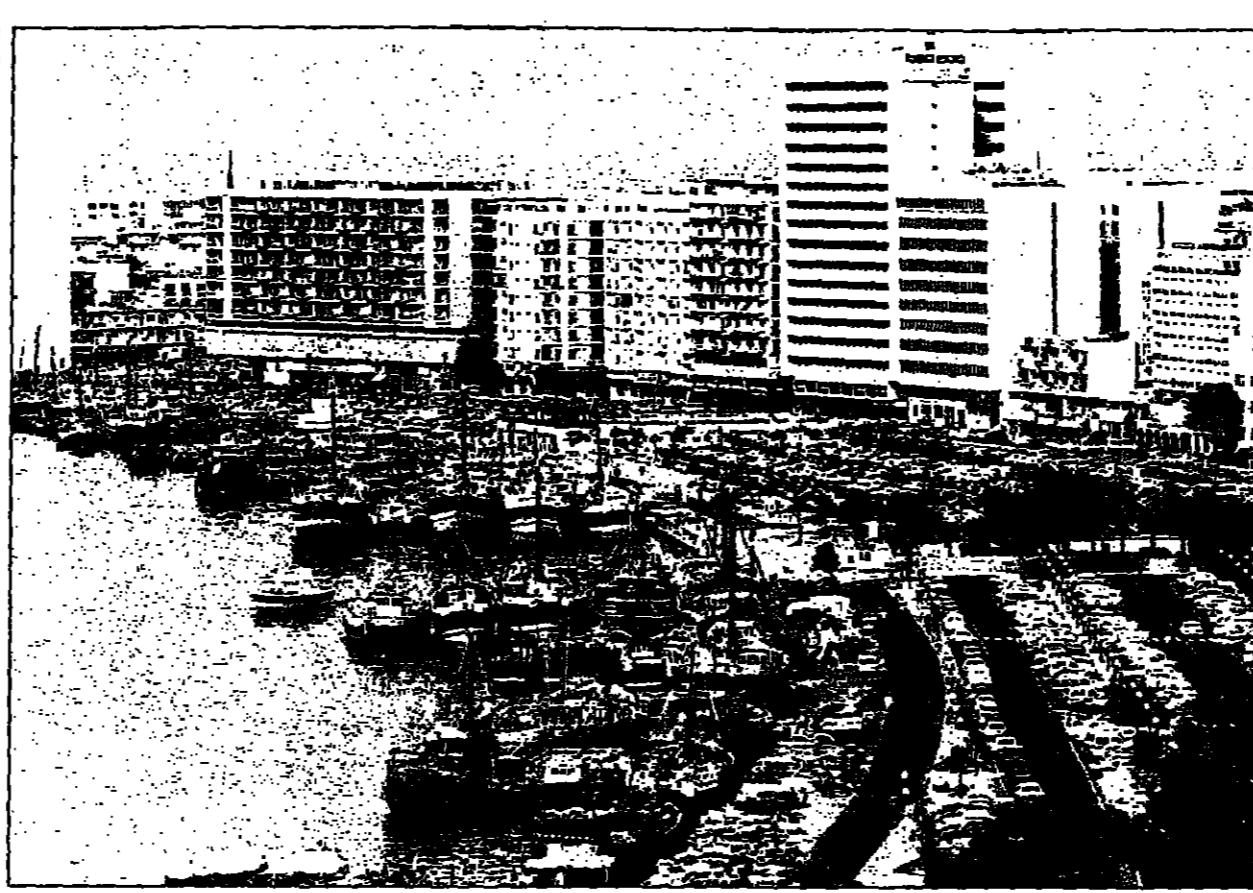
Ian Grant, the Scottish Tourist Board's chairman, said yesterday that the country was "winning the battle" to attract visitors, especially the English, out of season. He added: "It is clear that our campaigns, together with the support of the trade, are producing tangible results.

Scotland is now known as a short-break leisure and business destination throughout the year; it is recognised as offering style, culture and quality."

John French, the Wales Tourist Board chief executive, said: "Tourism in Wales is experiencing an exciting time, with a 31 per cent increase in overseas visitors in the first half of last year.

"The industry is gaining in confidence, announcing new products at the fair, including the Festival Park factory shopping complex at Ebby Vale, the Welsh Gold Visitor Centre in Dolgellau and the National Cycle Exhibition at Llandrindod Wells."

He said that the European summit in Cardiff next year and the Rugby World Cup in 1999 would put the country in the world spotlight. Investment in new hotels and attractions, including the National Botanic Garden, would, he claimed, make Wales "an unmissable destination".



New hotels, including what will be the tallest in the world, are being built to cope with Dubai's thriving tourist trade

Dubai hotels reach for the sky in battle for tourists

By HARVEY ELLIOTT IN DUBAI

BRITISH tourists who are bored with the Mediterranean and the Caribbean are turning to the travel industry's favourite holiday destination — Dubai.

The tiny Gulf state, which regularly tops the travel trade's internal league table of the most popular places to visit, is in such demand that new hotels — including what will become the tallest in the world — are being built along the shoreline.

"Until now we have concentrated on the business traveller, building the infrastructure and educating the travel industry on what we have to offer," says Patrick MacDonald, deputy chief executive of tourism and commerce for Dubai. "But we have come of age and matured, so now we can provide for the holidaymaker and the leisure traveller."

More than 40 British tour operators feature Dubai in their summer brochures, and locals are convinced that within the next five years the Emirate could become one of

the world's leading "play-

Tourism accounts for 12 per cent of Dubai's gross national product and is growing fast.

Oil, on which the country was founded, now provides only 18 per cent of its income and is still shrinking. It is predicted that within five years tourism will have overtaken oil as the most important sector of the economy.

Last year 110,000 visitors arrived from Britain, most of them aged over 40. But the fastest-growing numbers of tourists are from the former Soviet Union, India, Pakistan and other Arab states.

"We are already recognised as the main tourism centre for this region, but now we are extending into the rest of the world," says Mr MacDonald.

The state has an "open skies" policy and 80 international airlines now operate the Dubai route.

The country's airline, Emirates, which consistently wins awards from travel publica-

tions and organisations around the world, is expanding to meet the surge in demand for flights.

"About 75 per cent of our revenue now comes from the economy section of our aircraft," says Maurice Flanagan, managing director of Emirates. "Many of these are business travellers who are no longer allowed to fly in business class because their company wants to save money on travel expenses. That is why we have decided to put a telephone and video equipment in every seat, whatever the class of travel, and to give passengers more leg room than our competitors. But with the Government's plan to ensure that the country is not dependent on oil, we are turning more and more towards meeting the demands of tourism."

Sport has been the major attraction for high-spending visitors. Some of the most prestigious events from golf to tennis are held in Dubai, and

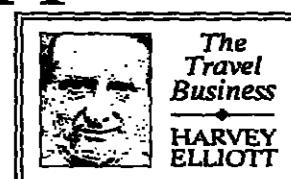
next week the world's richest horse race — the Dubai World Cup — will be watched by 20,000 people in the stadium and at least a billion on television in 197 countries.

Thirteen of the fastest horses from Britain, the Continent, Japan, Australia, Brazil, America and Dubai have been entered for the race, which carries prize money of \$4 million — but with no betting allowed on the outcome anywhere in Dubai.

Building is going on everywhere as Dubai grows to meet the surge in demand. The biggest development is the Chicago Beach resort, where 600 rooms are due to open next year. The complex includes a 1,059ft-high hotel built in the shape of a dhow under sail, which will be linked to the beach by a bridge. The hotel is expected to prove particularly popular with wealthy Arab visitors.

"We believe that the Chicago beach tower will become a symbol of Dubai as the Eiffel Tower is a symbol of Paris," Mr MacDonald says.

Duty-free end worries the big suppliers



AS THE Cheltenham Festival was taking place in perfect weather last week, a disgruntled man from Guinness — one of the event's main sponsors — was having to attend a London press conference to talk about duty-free sales.

Missing the races did not especially worry him. The galling thing was that he could tell no one really understood or cared about the disaster — the ending of duty-free sales — that many in the travel, drinks, tobacco, perfumes and other asso-

cieties are concerned is just around the corner.

Obviously, Guinness has a vested interest in maintaining the perk, which is enjoyed by more than 30 million British travellers and holidaymakers each year. As the owner of such well-known brands as Johnnie Walker, Bell's, Dewars and Gordon's, Guinness stands to lose tens of millions of pounds. And it is not alone in its opposition to the regulations.

The visit to the duty-free shop at either end of the journey or the last-minute present bought during the return flight has become an integral part of any trip within Europe. But in July 1999, in the interests of harmony within Europe, such visits will be banned.

The experts predicted last week that the move would cost the Treasury at least £18 million a year, destroy 1,500 jobs, hit manufacturing and retail profits by up to £345 million and put regional airports at risk.

In a detailed survey of the likely effects of the planned abolition of intra-European duty-free sales from July 1999, the European Travel Research Foundation says that the myth that duty-free sales are no more than a subsidy to travellers is destroyed.

The study was commissioned by the Duty Free Con-

federation which represents airports, airlines, ferry companies and the entire British duty-free industry, which now has sales worth more than £1 billion a year.

The decision in 1991 to phase out the concession was meant to come into force a year later. But ministers agreed to postpone implementation until 1999.

Barry Goddard, the con-

federation's secretary-general, says: "There is no justification for it, and the only argument put forward in its favour is that it is inconsistent with the single market. Amazingly, the European Commission has not yet studied what impact it would make on the different member countries, despite repeated promises to do so. So we did our own research."

The first report concen-

trates only on the economic impact on Treasury "take".

But early indications from parallel studies indicate that many ferry routes would be put in financial danger, the regional airports that rely on duty-free sales to keep down landing fees might be threatened.

The experts predicted last week that the move would cost the Treasury at least £18 million a year, destroy 1,500 jobs, hit manufacturing and retail profits by up to £345 million and put regional airports at risk.

Copies of the first report

have already been sent to the Conservative and Labour parties and officials and MEPs throughout Europe.

The man from Guinness and his colleagues fear that little notice will be taken. After all, nothing will happen for more than two years, too far in the future for most politicians or civil servants to worry about.

Prices halved as ferry war rages

By STEVE KEENAN

BRITTANY Ferries has halved prices on selected cross-Channel fares from West Country ports.

The move comes as a price war out of Dover continues to rage. Sea France this week offered any 1997 crossing for £89, undercutting rival fares already two-thirds cheaper than last summer's peak.

Brittany's managing director Ian Carruthers said the decision to slash prices was aimed at filling off-peak ferries. The market to France is in fact buoyant, he said.

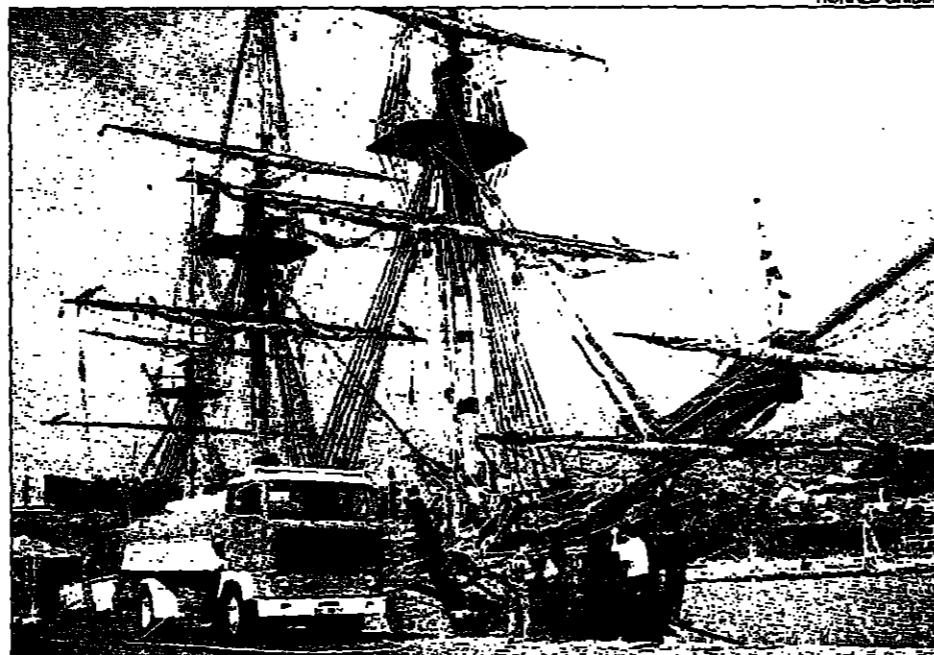
Standard return fares from Portsmouth, Poole and Plymouth are £140 for a car and up to five passengers, compared with brochure prices of up to £300.

Mr Carruthers claimed 1997 bookings were up by 25 to 26 per cent, with the Plymouth-Roscoff route up by 30 per cent.

Sea France became the latest ferry operator this week to extend early booking offers, with its £89 fare valid for any 1997 Dover-Calais crossing as long as it is booked by the end of the month.

P&O is offering any 1997 crossing on Dover-Calais for £145 until April 30, while Hoverspeed is quoting £99 on the route for bookings made by March 31.

Le Shuttle has a £140 fare for bookings by the end of the month and Stena Line has knocked 25 per cent off brochure fares for bookings made by the same time.



Firemen supply water to the Endeavour in Madeira last week before she left for the UK

Endeavour's royal arrival

By RONALD GRIBLE

of them have been on the ship since she left Fremantle, Australia, five months ago.

The Endeavour will be open to the public at Greenwich from March 28 to April 13, before beginning a six-month 12-point tour of the UK. The ship will be dressed with artefacts as if Captain Cook and his crew had gone ashore. Visitors will be able to see the conditions under which Cook's pioneering voyages of exploration were made.

To coincide with Endeavour's arrival at Greenwich, the National Maritime Museum is to stage a Captain Cook exhibition in the Queen's House from next Monday to September 28 and unveil a Cook statue in the grounds.

Afterwards the Endeavour leaves for a nine-day exhibition at St Helier, Jersey (September 27-October 5) and in St Malo (October 7-12), before returning to Plymouth on Friday October 17. She will then be refurbished before preparing for a voyage to the United States.

• The Endeavour's UK itinerary

Great Yarmouth (April 19-28)

Boston (May 2-5)

Whitby (May 10-18)

Leith, Edinburgh (May 24

June 1)

Inverness (June 7-15)

Greenock (June 28-July 6)

Liverpool (July 11-20)

Fishguard (July 26-August 3)

Falmouth (August 9-17)

Plymouth (August 23-31)

Weymouth (September 6-9)

Brighton (September 13-21)

Times readers have the chance to win a five-day Paint Magic course

run by Jocasta Innes called *Becoming a Decorator*. The popular course, which is held every month, usually costs £530.

The course is introduced by Jocasta Innes, widely known for her innovative approach to interior decorating and paint effects, and taught by her team of experts.

You learn practical skills, what equipment to invest in, advice on setting up your own business, how to design

your portfolio and quote for jobs.

For your nearest Paint Magic shop please call 0171-354 9696.

HOW TO ENTER

Phone our hotline 0839 444 546 with your answer to: Which BBC homes programme is Jocasta Innes on? a) Home Front; b) House Detectives; c) Changing Rooms

The Times offers you a FREE ticket, worth at least £7.50, for the first ever BBC Good Homes Show at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, from



The line is open until midnight tonight. Winners will be chosen at random from all correct entries. Normal T&Cs apply. 0839 calls cost 50p per minute. See tomorrow's Times for exquisite kilim stools.

FREE tickets for the BBC Good Homes Show

Plus a £10,000 Miele fitted kitchen to be won

The Times offers you a FREE ticket, worth at least £7.50, for the first ever BBC Good Homes Show at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, from



April 9-13. Collect three differently numbered tokens and send them, with a stamped sae marked on the front with which day you wish to attend and the application form which will appear again on Saturday. Your name will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win the Miele kitchen left.

Among the many live performances you can see in the Lloyds Bank Insurance Direct Celebrity Theatre are designers from *Changing Rooms* who will demonstrate speedy tricks for room makeovers.

Home Front's Jocasta Innes and Tessa Shaw will put you on the inside track for a speedy sale at the right price, and *House Detectives* Judith Miller, David Austin and Mac Dowdy will help you to unlock the secret past life of your home.

Call 0121 767 4000 to pre-book theatre and show admission tickets. (For a Miele brochure call 01235 554483.)

THE TIMES
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THE TIMES
ON SATURDAY

Ulster special
What's new in
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theme parks
Weekend break:
Iceland
Travel in Turkey
in the Amazon
rainforest
Ski by Eurostar
Travel tips

By ROBIN YOUNG

Airport food wins prizes

EGON RONAY, long-time scourge of motorway stations and British institutional catering, has a new vocation, weighing croissants and Danish pastries at British airports. Mr Ronay now operates an inspection service for BAA, the airport operator. Other awards went to Harry Ramsden's for the most appetising breakfast at Terminal 1 Heathrow, and for best chips, served at the chain's Glasgow Airport branch. Pret a Manger at Terminal 1 Heathrow took the title for tastiest sandwich with its Thai Chicken compilation.

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GOLF

Ballesteros likely to win vote over Ryder Cup reform

FROM MEL WEBB IN GRAN CANARIA

AFTER months of relentless and, at times, curt refusal to talk about the Europe Ryder Cup team that he will captain against the United States in September, Severiano Ballesteros broke his self-imposed silence yesterday to give his frankest thoughts yet on the composition of the team.

It has been known for some time that Ballesteros is not happy with the present system, under which ten players will earn their way into the team as of right, leaving him with only two wild-card selections. Perhaps it was the warmth of the Canary Islands sun that led him to such forthrightness, but it was a blunt Ballesteros who spoke of his desire to have the best Europe team, while behind his remarks was an unspoken

readiness to ruffle the feathers of even some of European golf's more exotic species.

Ballesteros said that he had spoken to Mark James, the chairman of the PGA European Tour's tournament committee, the body that represents the rank and file members, requesting that James should ask the players if they should approve Ballesteros having up to four selections in addition to those who earn their places off the money-list.

A players' meeting was held during the Portuguese Open last week, at which it is understood that the feeling was in favour. About 200 European tournament professionals are now to be balloted, with the captain being given three selections as the most probable compromise.

"I think I am going to get something out of it," Ballesteros said on the eve of the Turespafia Masters, that starts today here at Maspalomas. "I don't think it's unfair to change the system, but obviously it's going to be more difficult to finish in the top eight than the top ten in the points table."

"It would not be fair to change the rules in July or August after many big tournaments have been played, but we're only halfway through [the selection process]. It's very clear, very simple: I just want the best players in the team."

"Valderrama is a very difficult golf course that demands special players, and I don't want people getting a place in the team in ninth or tenth place just by playing every week. Extra picks would give me the scope to select — but maybe later on I would go straight through the top 12."

That statement might be seen as an indirect admonition, in particular, to Nick Faldo, who has said that he will not be playing the minimum number of 11 qualifying tournaments to earn his way in. However, it can be no more than sabre-rattling, and Ballesteros thinks of players who refuse point-blank to try to win a place in the team, it would be inconceivable for him to leave Faldo out.

"The only rule is that it is 12 men against 12," Ballesteros said. "I don't really care about the American side's rules. I only care about my responsibility to have the best team to play for Europe," Faldo concurrs. "Something needs to be done," he said yesterday. "The bottom line is that we must have the strongest team."

If Ballesteros' plans are

approved by the players — the ballot form is being prepared — it would help him to avoid the sort of hiatus that occurred before the 1995 match. Bernard Gallacher, the captain, selected Nick Faldo and José María Olazábal, but omitted Ian Woosnam before Olazábal's foot problems, then in their early stages, led him to withdraw.

Woosnam was promptly brought back into the team, but the fact remained that the captain was forced by the rules to leave one of his best players out of his original line-up.

They had ample opportunity to do so, but Stuart Moffat, the scorer of the game's only try, had left his kicking boots in the Midlands. Of six penalty attempts, he could convert only one, and, though Alan Buzz's conversion attempt of the try drifted wide, his kick

was good enough to give his team a 19-12 victory. "I think it was a miracle of sport not to make the cut. I played well and putted well but holed nothing," he said. "In the second round, she had a nine at the 16th, a par-five where she was hitting a six-iron for her second shot but put three balls into the water and ended from 20 feet for her quadruple bogey.

That particular quad could prove more omen than omen — the last time Davies missed the cut in Tucson was 1996.

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more and I used to like them a lot."

It is not for lack of effort or achievement on Davies's part. Today, she is in Phoenix, Arizona, attempting to win the Standard Register Ping tournament at Moon Valley for the fourth successive year.

Louis Suggs, Sandra Haynie and Kathy Whitworth, all members of the Hall of Fame, won a tournament three times in a row but no player on the LPGA Tour has ever managed a quad.

Davies, who missed the cut in Tucson last week, plays down her chances. "It can't keep on," she said. "My luck here has to run out."

There must be a law to support that theory — and Karmi Webb and Annika Sorenstam, who have thwarted the odd Davies dream in the past two years, have started the season well — but, Davies also said: "I've never been hitting the ball better."

In the American idiom, she was more ticked off than tempted. "I thought it best for my golf not to accept," she said, with some sarcasm. "I mean, it would have changed my whole lifestyle — I'd have been buying aeroplanes and all sorts."

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In the American idiom, she was more ticked off than tempted. "I thought it best for my golf not to accept," she said, with some sarcasm. "I mean, it would have changed my whole lifestyle — I'd have been buying aeroplanes and all sorts."

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more and I used to like them a lot."

It is not for lack of effort or achievement on Davies's part. Today, she is in Phoenix, Arizona, attempting to win the Standard Register Ping tournament at Moon Valley for the fourth successive year.

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RACING: BIN SUROOR AND CECIL PREPARE FOR ANOTHER EPIC DUEL FOR FLAT TRAINERS' TITLE

Curtain rises with blind leading the blind

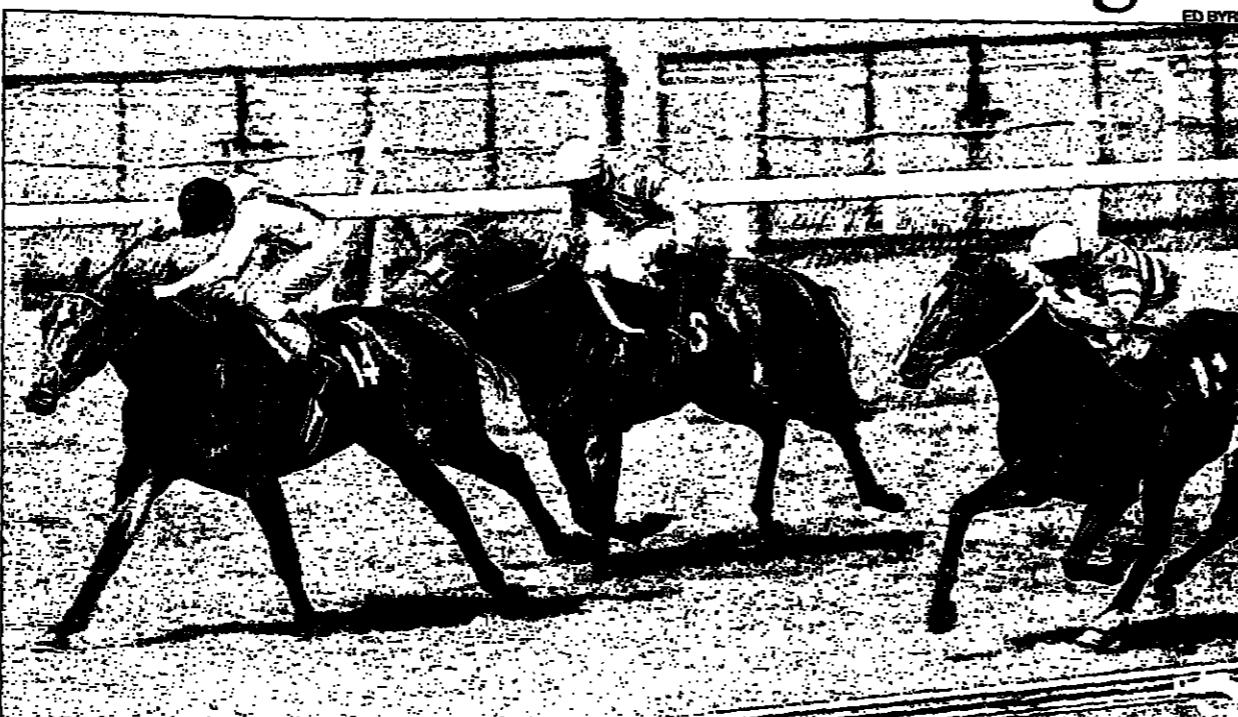
BY JULIAN MUSCAT

NOTHING better illustrates the eccentricity of British racing than the fare on the breakfast plane this morning. After digesting the spate of withdrawals from the Grand National, to be run over 4½ miles and 30 fences, punters will turn their attention to the Brocklesby Stakes, a sprint over five-eighths of a mile, in between jump racing's twin

Only 54 horses have been left in the Grand National at the second forfeit stage yesterday, raising fears that the race will again fall short of a 40-runner maximum field. Notable withdrawals include Dublin Flyer, Superior Finish, Sir Peter Lely, Into The Red, Coome Hill and Fantaus.

peaks. Flat racing on turf gets under way at Doncaster.

Indeed, the Brocklesby is the ultimate absurdity as an opening-day highlight. Those first, hesitant steps into the darkness of a new season are compounded by an event in which none of the 15 runners has previously seen a racecourse. The blind are leading the blind and bookmakers, fatigued on the proceeds of Cheltenham, are licking their lips in anticipation.



Yeast, seen winning the Victoria Cup at Ascot last season, is fancied to make a winning reappearance at Doncaster

The best to be said of it is that small players can have their day before the heavyweights assemble next month. In the absence of an outstanding horse from another stable, 1997 promises another titanic joust between Saeed bin Suroor and Henry Cecil. Last

year, they dominated to such an extent that John Gosden, who finished third in the rankings, trailed the pair by almost £1 million.

Both protagonists commence with an abundance of talent. So laden is Cecil with high quality fillies that he

subscribed a quartet to the 2,000 Guineas. However, bin Suroor's Godolphin team houses 17 candidates for the spring classics. And word emanating from Dubai has it that Shamikh is moving with the ease of a magic carpet. Godolphin's season will be

did strengthen his hand, he did by purchasing privately. Thus the munitions of Gosden, Michael Stoute and David Loder have survived intact—although it remains to be seen whether Sheikh Hamdan's small but select string, which wintered in Dubai, ends up in Godolphin's clutches. Stoute and Loder are not short of classic material but it is Gosden who stands to gain most from Godolphin's change of emphasis.

Gosden's string, systematically ransacked in previous winters, looks well balanced and is reportedly forward enough to make an early show. It is hoped that it will not be one-way traffic. The likes of Royal Crusade (William Haggas), Crimson Tide (John Hills), Royal Amaretto (Brian Meehan), Baked Alaska (Alec Stewart) and Potent and Mandilak (Luca Cumani) have shown great potential in their forays to date.

Among jockeys, one wonders what Frankie Dettori will conjure after his Aspat seven-timer. If his enthusiasm continues to infect his mounts, anything is possible. Willie Carson has retired, and with Kieren Fallon now riding for Cecil, Pat Eddery stands at the crossroads of a glittering career. It will require an immense effort from Eddery's camp to keep him at the top.

Yeast can make fine start to new campaign

DONCASTER CHANNEL 4

2.05 A tricky opener for television punters with several unexposed runners stepping up in trip, some making a seasonal reappearance while others are fit from the all-weather. Sword Arm, who beat an all-aged field of maidens over an extended mile at Wolverhampton recently, should appreciate this stiffer test of stamina and can oblige for Roger Charlton, who won this race last year with Jackson Hill. Miracle Kid, representing the formidable John Gosden-Frankie Dettori team, and Pennywell are lightly-raced winners over considerable improvement, while Lady Godiva is arguably the form choice judged on some of last term's efforts.

2.38 There are as many tips as runners in the first two-year-old race of the new Turf season and the market is often the best guide. Mick Channon normally has his juveniles turned up and Richard Quinn is booked for Stately Princess. The Robellino filly has been working nicely at home and should be sharp enough to win first time out, according to her trainer, Bill Turner. Turner won this race last year and Mister Banks is another who has been showing up well at home. The colt is by Risk Me, who often produces decent early two-year-olds.

3.40 Brutal Fantasy has shown markedly improved form on the all-weather this winter and if he can reproduce his winning efforts at Southwell and Wolverhampton, Les Eyré's runner will go close. Bishops Court impressed in both his races last term, winning easily at Hamilton on his second start, and he should win his share of races this season. Elfin Lad, who signed off last year by winning a Newmarket nursery, still looks reasonably treated and is marginally preferred.



TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

runner should have conditions to suit in this small field, drawn near the stands' rail. Amrik Ajeeb put up his best performance when winning a decent Ascot handicap last September and would go close if repeating that effort. However, the interesting runner is Canyon Creek, who justified short-priced favouritism on his belated debut last year. The well-bred Mr Prospector colt is highly regarded and could make up into a smart four-year-old.

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RICHARD EVANS

DONCASTER

THUNDERER
1.30 Galapino 3.10 Canyon Creek
2.05 MIRACLE KID (nap) 4.10 Miles Baby
2.35 Stately Princess 4.40 Fly To The Stars

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

1.30 RACING CHANNEL APPRENTICE HANDICAP
(£2,978 1m 4f (24 runners))

101 (2) 30951 1 OPERA BUFF 6f (D,F,G) (3 Tregoda) Miss G. Kellaway 6-9-10 ... A Whelan 98
102 (3) 62620 1 MIDWAY BLUE 131 (F,G) (P) Farren J. Fahey 7-3-10 ... S. Haughton (7) 93
103 (7) 671522 1 BLAZER JACK 616 (D,F,G) (P) Gossman D. Nichols 6-10-12 ... J. Woods (2) 93
104 (12) 14923 1 BURGESS 100 (D,F,G) (P) Gossman D. Nichols 6-10-12 ... J. Woods (2) 93
105 (13) 30252 1 PHARAOH 175 (G,F,G) (P) Hales 6-9-7 ... R. Fewey (7) 96
106 (17) 62522 1 ALMUTRAHM 142 (F,G) (A-Al-Khalid) 6 Levels 5-5-9 ... J. Deneen (5) 96
107 (18) 220210 1 SWIFT SWIFT 100 (F,G) (P) (M) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... C. Carter (7) 96
108 (19) 522800 1 CORN FAIRMADE 100 (F,G) (P) (M) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... C. Carter (7) 96
109 (20) 47402 1 MIRACLE KID 100 (F,G) (P) (M) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... C. Carter (7) 96
110 (21) 522800 1 HORSE NATURE 140 (F,G) (P) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... C. Carter (7) 96
111 (22) 295104 1 ADDOUR 23 (D,F,G) (P) (C) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... A. McCarthy (7) 96
112 (23) 45520 1 DOWAGER MAIOR 19 (D,F,G) (P) (C) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... D. Griffiths (5) 95
113 (24) 110008 1 CHARGO 21 (F,G) (P) (C) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R. Hennig (7) 96
114 (25) 43121 1 RAPPIERS ROOSTER 193 (F,G) (P) (M) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... J. G. Deneen (7) 96
115 (26) 455202 1 BANBURY 17 (F,G) (P) (M) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R. Hennig (7) 96
116 (27) 455202 1 BANBURY 17 (F,G) (P) (M) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R. Hennig (7) 96
117 (28) 19610 1 MIRACLE KID 100 (F,G) (P) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R. Hennig (7) 96
118 (29) 313222 1 KALMATHYATTA 600 (F,G) (P) (M) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R. Hennig (7) 96
119 (30) 61882 1 BELL 100 (F,G) (P) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R. Hennig (7) 96
120 (31) 61882 1 RESERVATION ROCK 8 (F,G) (P) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R. Hennig (7) 96
121 (32) 61882 1 FABULOUS MINTO 78 (F,G) (P) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R. Hennig (7) 96
122 (33) 61882 1 MIRACLE KID 100 (F,G) (P) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R. Hennig (7) 96
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191 (102) 61882 1 KALMATHYATTA 600 (F,G) (P) Morris A. Jones 4-4-5 ... R.

FOOTBALL: NEWCASTLE CHAIRMAN DISMAYED BY TEAM'S COLLAPSE IN UEFA CUP QUARTER-FINAL

Hall must rebuild crumbling castle

By DAVID MADDOCK

HAVING started out in his business life as an architect, Sir John Hall has always enjoyed an instinct for creation. His Metro Centre in the North East is the ultimate monument to the Thatcherite culture of the Eighties, and Newcastle United's rebirth was another of his grand designs.

Now, however, as all architects are forced to do, he must turn his mind to the more mundane task of rebuilding. The structure he so impressively constructed, the club he took from drawing-board to shining, brilliant reality, is now beginning to crumble.

His builder, Kevin Keegan, has gone, and the team he left behind is showing signs of distress. Newcastle were woe-begone in Monaco, collapsing spectacularly in the second half after conceding a goal just before the break.

Newcastle were simply outclassed during the second period of their UEFA Cup quarter-final second leg, and after spending £60 million, Sir John has every right to be depressed at such a limp display. Only now can he appreciate the size of the task that faces Kenny Dalglish, the new manager, if he is to rebuild the club and capture the honours that such spending demands.

The chairman's face at Newcastle airport yesterday showed that he does not underestimate the job ahead, as did his blunt one-word comment: "Disgraceful."

Later yesterday, after calmer reflection, he acknowledged that Dalglish will have to create his own team quickly, using his own raw materials, and not those left behind by Keegan, whose team, Sir John

effectively conceded, will not win anything. "In a sense, this is the end of the Keegan era, and that's probably it for the team assembled by Keegan," he said.

"I've gone through some ups and downs before this. On Tuesday, I was very disappointed, especially with our second-half performance, because we were outclassed. One lesson that must be learnt amid all the emotion surrounding our display is that when you reach this stage of the competition, you are meeting the best teams, and, if you don't have your best team, your limitations will be exposed. But I also think that English football will have to look at its coaching methods. Where are all our coaches? Monaco were quicker, fitter and had better skills."

After spending such a vast amount, Sir John is entitled to ask why he has not had a better return from his investment, particularly when Keegan made such a promising start. The former manager was outstanding in turning the club around but Tuesday's evidence suggests that Newcastle lack certain fundamental qualities to make the final step on the long road towards honours.

Not only were Keegan's eccentricities in defence still readily visible under Dalglish — unsurprising given that they are the same players but so was the shallowness of the squad. There are injuries, but Newcastle are missing only two automatic choices: Shearer and Ferdinand. Two injuries then, and a painful lack of depth is exposed.

Keegan did not create a structure beyond the first team to support the exciting players he purchased. He also ignored the obvious need in a balanced team for players who defend naturally. At Newcastle, they are almost all attackers by nature. Even defenders like Watson, Albert and Elliott.

When there are injuries, because the reserve and A teams have been scrapped, the

cupboard is empty when Dalglish goes in search of replacements. Dalglish has already reversed that situation but the new manager's emphasis on the development of youth will take time to pay dividends.

Meanwhile, he will be given funds by Sir John, and encouraged to spend quickly in pursuit of the missing quality. "Kenny Dalglish is in total command of team selection, and the manager of Newcastle United has always been backed financially by this board," Sir John said.

"I know he's looking at players closely, and we must give him time. I am very impressed by Kenny Dalglish as a manager. This is just a temporary setback. We came from nowhere in five years, and this is part of a learning curve. Our pride is hurt more than anything, because of the manner of defeat, but we will get it right."

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ATHLETICS: BRITON IN GOOD SPIRITS FOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS AFTER TWO HEART OPERATIONS

Tromans refuses to beat a retreat

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

FOR the motorists who last saw Glynn Tromans lying flat by the roadside in his running kit, waving away offers of help through an apparent distress, it might please them to know he made a full recovery. Two heart operations later, Tromans makes his debut for Great Britain in the world cross-country championships in Turin on Sunday.

While our running, Tromans's chest would tighten and, if he continued, he would feel out of breath, start to wheeze and his heart would thump, sometimes reaching 220 beats per minute. "I would feel like I had just completed the London Marathon," Tromans said. "Full of lactic acid, drained and shattered."

As these attacks grew more frequent — he suffered more than 70 in all — he found that, by lying flat on the ground, his heart rate would soon return to normal. "People would stop in their cars and ask if I needed help," Tromans recalled. "I would just lay there and say: 'I am alright, thanks very much.'"

Which, of course, he was not. However, while medical experts strived for a year to diagnose his condition, Tromans stubbornly refused to abandon training. In an act of extraordinary defiance, he went to Cwmbran for his England track debut two summers ago after 11 attacks in the preceding month. As he was warming up for his 3,000 metres race, another attack developed.

"I had done my warm-up jog, and my stretching, and there were probably 15 minutes to go before the start," Tromans recalled. "I did my first stride down the track and the symptoms came on. I was thinking: 'What do I do? I know I am in trouble and a sensible person would not run, but I am making my England debut and it is just England against Wales, only four people in the race. I felt obliged.'" Tromans ran and finished second. There was neither rhyme nor reason to the attacks. Sometimes they would occur when he was running hard, sometimes when he was running easy. "Sometimes I could run for two hours, sometimes only for half a minute," Tromans said.

Not that he was put off. "I never

thought of it in terms of being a serious health risk, although in retrospect I probably should have," Tromans said.

Although the attacks began in 1991, they were not often enough to make me think there was something wrong." However, in 1993, his search for answers intensified, so frequent had the interruptions become. He had been forced to drop out of the world cross-country trial when in a qualifying position. Then he was frustrated in his attempt to impress Ian Stewart, the British Athletic Federation head of promotions.

"I had gone to Birmingham to train and Ian was there," Tromans said. "He had just replaced Andy Norman and I thought it would be a good chance to impress him. But I was unable to complete the session." His frustration grew as the list of those unable to cure him grew ever longer.

They included his doctor, two hospitals in Coventry, where he lives, an asthma and allergy research centre and the British Olympic Medical Centre. "I was chasing around looking for answers," Tromans said. "Nobody even mentioned the heart. The emphasis was on the difficulty breathing." Finally, Dr Frank Newton, the national cross-country team doctor, sent him to a cardiologist.

"I thought it might be a heart condition," Newton said. "Normally for an athlete, the maximum heart rate is 220 minus your age. He would go along comfortably at 150 and suddenly it would go up to 220 and he would get a pain in his chest." Tromans was found to have extra nerve pathways in his heart. "The operations were to cut the extra pathways so he is left only with the ones he should have," Newton added.

"He was getting extra sets of electrical messages and the effect was to push his heart rate much too high. Now he is getting only one set of electrical messages."

Since his second operation, ten months ago, Tromans's heart has been fine, though old frustrations, those of injury, have returned.

Tonsilitis, stress fractures in both



Tromans will make his Great Britain debut in Turin after a career blighted by his heart problem

legs and a knee operation have

contributed towards blank pages in his training diary over the years, and he would have made his Great Britain debut in November but for a calf strain.

"I did wonder whether I was jinxed," Tromans, 28, said. "I had been in the sport a long time and, just at the point where I was likely to make a breakthrough, something always seemed to go wrong."

However, at the British trials for Turin, he finished fourth.

booking his place, and prompting Bud Baldaro, a Great Britain team coach, to say: "You can liken this to the guy playing Sunday soccer who, in his middle to late twenties, suddenly vaults to Pre-miership status."

It was an appropriate analogy, given that Tromans began running in frustration at his failure to make his secondary school football team, though he later played for Coventry Schools while his athletics looked less promising:

he was 139th in his first English national, as a youth.

Now he is set for the world's hardest foot race, one more competitive than any Olympic or world championship track competition, because the Kenyans, the Ethiopians and the Moroccans have nine to a team. "If I can finish in the top 50, that would be a good performance," Tromans said. Nothing like his remarkable performance in getting to the start, though.

SNOOKER: FORMER WORLD CHAMPION NARROWLY AVOIDS MAKING EARLY EXIT

Parrott ends Murphy's stout resistance

FROM PHIL YATES
IN CO KILDARE

STEPHEN MURPHY gave John Parrott a considerable scare in the Benson and Hedges Irish Masters at Goffs here yesterday before the former world champion defeated him 6-5 in a keenly contested first-round match.

Murphy, the world No 6, who received a wild-card entry into the tournament, led 2-0 and even though Parrott subsequently compiled breaks of

48, 67 and 129, the highest of the event so far, to move 4-3 ahead, he was unable to stifle the stubborn resistance of his inexperienced but clearly determined rival.

Trailing 5-4, Murphy comfortably won the tenth frame and threatened to cause arguably the biggest upset in the tournament's 19-year history when on a run of 17 and occupying prime scoring position in the decider.

However, Murphy, a member of the Ireland team who

surprisingly figured in the final of the World Cup in November, missed a vital black and Parrott put together a contribution of 51 to set up a meeting with Darren Manous, the defending champion, in the quarter-finals.

Stephen Hendry, the favourite for the £72,000 first prize and his fifth title of the season, enters the fray this evening with a quarter-final against Jimmy White, an opponent to whom he has lost only once in the past five

years. White's confidence, which is returning after a dismal start to the season, was further bolstered by a 6-3 first-round victory over Alan McManus on Tuesday. Even so, Hendry is widely expected to progress, having beaten White 5-2 in the quarter-finals of the recent International Open and the last 16 of the Thailand Open eight days ago.

RESULTS: Yesterday. First round: J Parrott (Eng) 6-5 Murphy (Eng) 6-5. Late Tuesday: H O'Sullivan (Eng) 6-5 N Bond (Eng) 6-5.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

CONTRACTS & TENDERS

1. NOTICE OF PREQUALIFICATION

The Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Communications and Works (MCW), Public Works Department (PWD) intends to prequalify tenders for projects which are briefly described below. The projects will be financed by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. The tenders may be funded from funds which the Government may obtain from local or international funding bodies.

a) Construction of new motorways to similar or better standards to those existing on island. These will be built in 4-lane or 6-lane carriageways and would include interchanges, viaducts, bridges and culverts. Construction period for the various schemes will vary between 12 months and 30 months depending on the particular project.

b) Rehabilitation and improvement of rural and suburban roads. These works include new construction, reconstruction, widening of roads and where appropriate, minor redesigning of roads to improve traffic flow. Construction period for these schemes will vary from 1.0 to 20.0 months US dollar approximately. Construction will per for the various schemes will vary between 12 months and 30 months depending on the particular project.

c) Rehabilitation, strengthening and periodic maintenance of rural and suburban roads. Estimated construction values for the candidate schemes will vary from 0.5 to 10.0 million US dollars per annum. Construction period for the various schemes will be between 12 months and 30 months depending on the particular project.

d) It is an essential requirement that all aspects of construction shall be carried out in accordance with the relevant codes of practice and international recognised specifications for materials and workmanship.

e) Prequalification is open to all contractors and joint ventures of such tenderers. However, prequalification shall be subject to any relevant Funding Body which may have been approached by the tenderer. Local contract must be signed in accordance with the relevant Contractors' Code of Conduct and be classified as Cyrenian Category for Civil Works.

f) Interested contractors may inquire or obtain further information or obtain the Prequalification Document, free of charge, from the office of the Director, Public Works Department, Ministry of Communications and Works.

Head Office: Procurement Section, Room 102, 2nd Floor, 2000 Nicosia-Cyprus. Telephone: 02-449001. Tel: 02-302008 as from the 2nd April 1997. To avoid delays interested contractors are advised to obtain the Prequalification Document either in person or through an authorised representative.

The Prequalification Document may also be requested by any interested contractor by the submission of a written application to the above address. The application should be submitted to the Director, Public Works Department, 2000 Nicosia-Cyprus, by the 1st March 1997. All debts and claims should be sent to me at the above address.

All contractors who have not already done so are invited to provide their claim in writing to the Director, Public Works Department, 2000 Nicosia-Cyprus, to prove debts or to obtain payment for work done or to be held responsible for loss or damage of the documents so needed.

g) The Prequalification Document must be duly completed and returned to the Director, Public Works Department, 2000 Nicosia-Cyprus, by the 1st March 1997. The Prequalification Document, to be received before 9.00am local time on Friday 30 May 1997.

LEGAL NOTICES

EASTERN TRACTORS LIMITED
(ADMINISTRATIVE
RECEIVERSHIP)

A meeting of the creditors of Eastern Tractors Limited is to be held at 10.00 am on Friday 21st March, 1997 at the offices of Leonard Curtis & Co, situated at 30 Eastbourne Terrace, London, SW3 4LR, to consider the provisions of Section 46 of the Insolvency Act 1986. The object of this meeting is to receive the report of the receivers and to consider a resolution to appoint a committee of creditors. Creditors holding 25% or more of the value of the debts of the company and who wish to attend should contact the receivers, Leonard Curtis & Co, 0171-922 6441/52 and ask for the name of the creditors whose claims are wholly secured or to be paid or represented at the meeting.

It is not intended to propose any resolution at the meeting concerning the liquidation of the company, however the creditors may vote to do so. Creditors holding 25% or more of the debts of the company will be held at 7.00 pm on Friday 21st March 1997 at the offices of Leonard Curtis & Co, 30 Eastbourne Terrace, London, SW3 4LR, to consider the provisions of Section 46 of the Insolvency Act 1986. The object of this meeting is to receive the report of the receivers and to consider a resolution to appoint a committee of creditors. Creditors holding 25% or more of the value of the debts of the company and who wish to attend should contact the receivers, Leonard Curtis & Co, 0171-922 6441/52 and ask for the name of the creditors whose claims are wholly secured or to be paid or represented at the meeting.

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that a meeting of the creditors of the above company will be held at 7.00 pm on Friday 21st March 1997 at the offices of Leonard Curtis & Co, 30 Eastbourne Terrace, London, SW3 4LR, to consider the provisions of Section 46 of the Insolvency Act 1986. The object of this meeting is to receive the report of the receivers and to consider a resolution to appoint a committee of creditors. Creditors holding 25% or more of the value of the debts of the company and who wish to attend should contact the receivers, Leonard Curtis & Co, 0171-922 6441/52 and ask for the name of the creditors whose claims are wholly secured or to be paid or represented at the meeting.

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KEYNOTE LIMITED

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Men's final at world championships promises to set new standards

Skaters taking a quantum leap through the wall

FROM SIMON BARNES IN LAUSANNE

STATISTICIANS talk about the Right Wall. It is the vertical line on the grass beyond which you cannot go. Further improvement, greater complexity, additional aspiration: none of these can exist beyond the Right Wall. The speed of light is a Right Wall; so is absolute zero. You simply cannot be faster or colder than these two things.

It is the task of the great athlete — perhaps of human kind — to storm that Right Wall. The history of sport turns and turns again on the battering of one illusory obstacle after another. The most famous of all these was the four-minute mile. It looked like a Right Wall, but when men and the time were right, it turned out to be a paper hoop. Roger Bannister plunged through it and hundreds of athletes have followed.

It is beyond question that a Right Wall exists for physical achievements, but where exactly does it lie? As athletes have crashed through a succession of paper hoops throughout sporting history, so they have inched and centimetre their way towards the real Right Wall. The nine-second 100 metres? The two-hour marathon? No doubt future generations of sports writers will discuss such matters in centuries to come.

In the sport of ice skating, the Right Wall has always been the quad. The quadruple jump: four rotations, 1440 degrees. Triples have become commonplace, the bread and butter of the elite. What sorts out the champions from the rest thus far has been the combinations: to bounce from triple to triple, and to do so clean, hard and high: that is what winners do, must do. And here, it seems, they dwelt at the foot of the Right Wall.

No longer. Here, at the world figure skating championships, all this is being redefined. For the first time the world championship will be decided by a new standard. Who quads wins.

No fewer than three of the leading contenders at the world championships are threatening to perform a quad jump tonight in the final of the

men's event. All three have already taken off in quad jumps in this competition: but only two of them have landed.

"It looks easy," Alexei Urmanov, of Russia, said, "but the last two practices it was a problem for me." Ilya Kulik, another Russian, also nailed — American sportspeak for practically any form of success — his quad. This was after breaking a blade off his skates when practising a mere triple. His mother managed to send him a replacement from Russia and the new blade is working like a charm.

Elvis Stojko, the gloriously named Canadian, has long been fighting a crusade to bring skating into line as the most macho of all sports. He prefers wearing leather wristbands and torn jeans to swan costumes and frilly blouses. Musical interpretation is for

Three leading contenders have taken off in quad jumps in the competition, but only two have landed'

wimpy: you glide for show, but you quad for dough.

He was the quadder who missed, though, tumbling on landing. "But it felt good. We are on track for Thursday," he said. Stojko is also a black belt in the martial arts, perhaps the only form of art he really recognises. "Martial arts help me remain composed," he said. "It looks good and there will definitely be a quadruple in the programme."

This was after the men's short programme yesterday, which provides a third of the total marks: the real show-down comes in the free programme tonight. The qualifying programme is for throwing down the gauntlet.

The short programme was stolen by Urmanov, a sumptuous routine from a man who has never understood that grace can compromise your masculinity. But then he is seriously Russian. He is in pole position going into the free programme tonight. It is set to be the biggest shoot-out in ice skating history.

Results, page 52



Stojko was first to perform a quad-triple combination and may attempt another tonight

Urmanov holds narrow lead

ALEXEI URMANOV, the Olympic champion from Russia, narrowly beat off the challenge of his rivals to hold first place after the men's short programme at the world figure skating championships in Lausanne yesterday. He is ahead of Todd Eldredge, of the United States, and Ilya Kulik, of Russia. If any one of the leading three wins the long programme today, he will take the gold medal.

Elvis Stojko, of Canada, the champion in 1994 and 1995, was fourth with Alexei Yagudin, another Russian and only 17, in fifth place. All the leading skaters performed the difficult triple Axel-triple

loop combination in their routines, but it was the presentation that proved decisive. Urmanov's routine, performed to a hard rock beat, earned him eight 5.9s in the presentation mark, compared with the string of 5.8s awarded to Eldredge for his interpretation of *Walk on the Wild Side*.

"It was a tough start to the competition, so many good programmes, but I feel good and I skated well," Urmanov said. "It's going to be tough again tomorrow, but I'm going to come out fighting for the gold medal and, of course, there will be a quad in the programme." The quadruple

involves making four rotations, and at least ten skaters are capable of landing a quad in the final free programme.

Stojko has a chance of taking gold, but he has to win today and hope that Urmanov falters badly. He has never hedged on attempting a quad and hit the first quad-triple combination in competitive history at the Champions Final last month. Urmanov said he was ready to offer hitting an easy quad in qualifying on Sunday.

Kulik is looking for more than a simple quad. "If my quad is good then I will try the combination," he said.

Britons fall short in head-to-head contest

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN TIGNES, FRANCE

THE growing attraction of the dual slalom discipline — racing head-to-head down short, parallel courses — was underlined by a thrilling final to the international team parallel slalom at the British Land national championships yesterday.

A strong Austria 2 team, lead by Christian Schwaiger, who is coaching the British men's technical team, and featuring a mix of younger athletes and coaches, were held to a dead heat by the Great Britain B team of Mark Reilly, Shona Robertson, Finlay Miskel and John Moulder-Brown. A re-run was called for and Schwaiger raced first and established a lead of one gate after Reilly hesitated between the start gate and the first turn. The British team, which

had an average age of just 20, was unable to get over that setback, but kept the final margin of defeat to less than one gate.

The British B team drew some consolation from the five-nation Golden Jubilee tournament here yesterday. Holland completed the rout by scoring three goals in the last nine minutes.

As one-sided as the result may seem, England had the edge in the first half, which ended with Crutchley shooting straight at the goalkeeper from a pass by Sharpe, who was England's strongest front runner.

From then onwards, however, everything went wrong. Garcia's penalty stroke midway through the second half bit a post and two goals were

conceded when Fordham was under suspension.

Holland led 1-0 at half-time, Lomans having converted a short corner in the 29th minute. Eikelboom, a substitute forward, increased their advantage two minutes into the second half and Brook added the third goal in the 55th minute, barely two minutes after Garcia's ill-fated penalty stroke.

From the 61st minute, England were engulfed by a tidal wave of Dutch attacks. Veen, the captain, scored twice and Brook added the sixth goal a minute from time.

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England washed away by Dutch tidal wave

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Didactic but wonderfully entertaining stuff

It's always a pleasure when scientists are good at metaphors. Last night, the first of a new series of *Seven Wonders of the World* (BBC2) gave us Professor Aubrey Manning — an enthusiastic natural history professor in colourful knitwear — who described "parallel evolution" in simple and enlightening terms. Look at the early days of motor-racing, he said; competing against each other were cars with big wheels, small wheels, wide wheels. But the variety was experimental, and destined not to last. If the racing-car is now boringly uniform, that's because the best design won. Similarly, if evolution demanded a "best dog", sooner or later it would end up with a wolf.

Seven Wonders was a pleasant science programme, designed in a shamelessly Reithian way to infect us with informed enthusiasm. It was also cheap, with no special filming trips to the Grand Canyon,

for example — just stock footage together with a wistful look in Manning's eye (nice try, professor). Luckily he chose "Trees" and "Durham Cathedral" as well, thus giving him a couple of days out, although I must say I was worried by the Durham Cathedral section. Kicking off with an old clip of Alec Clifton-Taylor (speaking from a quarry), it momentarily suggested Manning had chosen Clifton-Taylor himself — a nice thought, but sacrilegious in the context, setting a mere man alongside such marvels as mechanical engineering.

But for a scientist with a knack for metaphor, one turned to Adam Curtis's gripping documentary *The Way of All Flesh* (in BBC2's *Modern Times*). *The Way of All Flesh* concerned the little-known (but vastly significant) story of the virulent cancer cells propagated from one single person's body: a black American woman called Henrietta Lacks. Ever since these

"HeLa" cells were first harvested in 1951, they have burgeoned in test tubes around the world, and have run out of control. Cell biologist Walter Nelson-Rees blew the whistle on Henrietta in the 1970s. HeLa cells go into experiments like wedges, he said. Making circles with his outstretched forearms, he indicated "a rose here, a geranium there", but covering all his imaginary garden — thick and knotted — were Henrietta's weeds.

A dam Curtis was the young chap who brought us *Pandora's Box* in the early 1990s, a fascinating series which illustrated foiled scientific certainties of the 20th century. The modern faith in science to solve all ills turned out to be a faith that is repeatedly misplaced. "Can" and "do" are not words to be linked together so lightly. Viewers may remember his excellent DDT programme in which a die-hard DDT

REVIEW

Lynne Truss



supporter alarmingly poured white pesticide into his hand like Quaker Oats and licked it up.

Curtis adores nostalgic American television footage — and with cancer research as his subject, he was well provided with it. *Cancer Can Be Conquered* actually featured Dr Guy, the researcher who first used Henrietta Lacks's cells and made them grow. "I'm Bing Crosby," growled the emaciated

crooner, introducing a starry night in aid of the American Cancer Society in the early 1970s. Joan Crawford made a terrifying speech from a lectern, exhorting the world to track down that cancer virus and kill it. People are dying, she declared. "I do Not Approve" she declared, in ringing patriotic tones. "And I am Not Resigned."

But declaring war on cancer seems not to have scared it much; meanwhile Henrietta Lacks's cells have inexplicably turned up in experiments all over the world, ruining them. In the early 1970s, the Russians announced they had found the cancer virus, but when findings were checked, it was the same old story. Walter Nelson-Rees was the man equipped with the handy imagery again: "Take your marbles home," he said. Those disappointed Russians: "We're not going to play with your marbles." It was a depressing time for the scientists. As a result of the

publicity, the Lacks family finally learnt that bits of their Mom were still alive.

Following on from *Modern Times*, Jonathan Meades's *Even Further Abroad* (BBC2) explained the Andy Warhol approach to Campbell's soup cans and extended it. "Anything is fantastical if you stare at it long enough," he said. "It's even more fantastical if you stare at hundreds of it." While *demolised* cell scientists would be unlikely to agree, this theory provided Meades with a means to find "installation art" in the uniform landscape of the fens — drainage pipes piled up, telegraph poles encamped together, tyres in heaps. The "open prison of the fens" is rich in linear forms, it turns out. Even the horizon is straight. Even the dancing is linear.

Finally, talking of open prisons, the watchable *Insiders* (BBC1)

reached its penultimate episode, with a heavy-handed moral lesson on the importance of rehabilitation. Had prison-idiot Binnie (Graham Taylor) been adequately prepared for life outside? Well no, he hadn't. Instead, he had learnt to make model gypsy caravans out of matchsticks, and had taken excessive pride in his duties as bike monitor. He could, in short, be put behind glass as an example of Late 20th Century Hopelessly Institutionalised Man.

Naturally, one felt sorry for Binnie, but annoyed that the virtuous Woody (Adrian Rawlins) held himself in no way responsible for this state of affairs. To be honest, the virtuous Woody gets up my nose. Even when his PC instincts mislead him badly, he emerges justified — rather like the Tellow-coated Lorraine in *EastEnders*. Will Woody discover a fatal flaw in the closing episode next week — a knot in the pine, at last?

BBC1

6.00am *Business Breakfast* (86759)
7.00 BBC *Breakfast News* (7) (74827)
9.00 *Breakfast News Extra* (7) (5983846)
9.20 *Style Challenge* (4203223)

9.45 *Kinroy* (7) (4910488)
10.30 *Can't Cook, Won't Cook* (26117)

11.00 *News* (7): regional news and weather (6936255)

11.05 *The Really Useful Show* (7548914)
11.35 *Change That* (6136464)

12.00 *News* (7) and weather (7080914)

12.05pm *The Alphabet Game* (5021117)

12.30 *Going for a Song* (6391265)

12.55 *The Weather Show* (79482049)

1.00 *News* (7) and weather (77914)

1.30 *Regional News* (6312354)

1.40 *Neighbours* (7) (1129001)

2.05 *Quincy* (5861001)

2.50 *As Time Goes By* (7) (5755852)

3.20 *Noble Castles* (Reglan, Followed by *Shapes Of The Invisible* (1035371))

3.30 *Playdays* (5981730) 3.50 *Wham! Barn! Strawberry Jam!* (6347107) 4.05 *Casper Classics* (6662223) 4.10 *Rugrats* (1980020) 4.35 *The Really Wild Show* (7) (5935407) 5.00 *Newsround* (7) (329510)

5.10 *Grange Hill* (7) (4412551)

5.35 *Neighbours* (7) (7146434)

6.00 *News* (7) and weather (223)

6.30 *Newroom South East* (575)

7.00 *Watchdog* (7) (7662)

7.30 *EastEnders* Bians hears some shocking gossip about husband-to-be Ricky, Huw and Lenny's party is brought to an abrupt end (7) (758)

8.00 *Animal Hospital* New series. Roll Harris and the team go behind the scenes at Hampden Veterinary Hospital, Aylebury (7) (6310)

8.30 *A Perfect State* (Patricia Whitehead man Simon carries out his orders to the letter and pleads with the new independent state's one and only judge — with unexpected results) (7) (2117)

9.00 *News* (7): regional news and weather (5046)

9.30 *Men Behaving Badly* Babes Tony sneaks into Deborah's flat while she's out, and causes chaos. Meanwhile, Dorothy tells Gail she wants to start a family (7) (57575)

10.00 *Chalk* A soft-focus pup gives birth, prompting Eric Stoltz to deny any involvement with the girl. Comedy with David Bamber (7) (1818)

10.30 *Question Time* The Defence Secretary Michael Portillo, the Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Williams, the deputy editor of the Spectator, Anna McElroy, and the Shadow Transport Secretary Andrew Smith join David Dimbleby to address issues raised by members of the studio audience in London (81440)

11.30 *Sarah, Plain And Tall* (1991) starring Glenn Close, Christopher Walken and Lyle Rendell. Sentimental drama, set in the early part of the century, about a kindly schoolteacher from Maine who travels to Kansas to help a widowed farmer to raise his family. Directed by Glenn Jordan (7) (585136)

1.05am *Weather* (3083841)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are the Video PlusCode numbers which allow you to programme your recorder using the VideoPlus+ handset. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ (""), Pluscode ("") and Video Programmer are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

BBC2

6.00am *Open University: The Sunbathers* (701946) 6.25 *A Winter Sleep* (7921681)

6.55 *Breathing Deeply* (9753101) 7.15

News (782500) 7.30 *Rocky Racers* (7)

7.45 *Blue Peter* (7) (7)

(306517) 7.50 *Wishing* (7) (7455564)

8.35 *The Record* (5642001) 9.00 *The*

Science Collection (4218001) 9.25 *Job*

Bank (7573117) 9.45 *Megamaths*

(4385469) 10.00 *Playdays* (40710.30)

Storytime (7798204) 10.45 *The*

Experimenter (2034952) 11.05 *Space Ark*

(6957778) 11.15 *In Living Memory*

(9602223) 11.35 *Landmarks* (810136)

11.55 *Techno* (767117) 12.15pm

Quince Minutes Plus (5183001) 12.30

Working Lunch (68681) 1.00 *LifeSchool*

(3503733) 1.25 *Isabel* (4724130) 1.45

Numberline (6311963) 2.00 *Wishing*

(3674137) 2.12 *Everyone's Got One*

(2900865) 3.00 *News* (7) 3.05

Westminster (6452020) 3.35 *News*

(7) 3.45 *Today's The Day* (488) 4.30 *Ready*

Steady, Cook (372) 4.45 *Playdays*

5.30 *World Figure Skating Championships*

The original set pattern ice dance (952)

6.00 *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (7)

(502776) 6.45 *Quantum Leap* (7) (707310)

7.30 *First Sight: Living Longer, Caring*

Less What happened to the concept of care in the community in the South East (371) WALES: *Local Heroes* EAST: *Matter of Fact* MIDLANDS: *Midlands Report* NORTH/NORTH EAST/NORTH WEST/SOUTH WEST: *Closed Up South*: *Southern Eye*

8.00 *Local Heroes* SCIENCE Special Celebrating the anniversaries of inventions that became part of our everyday lives (492)

8.30 *Top Gear* Quentin Wilson goes for a ride in the Mercedes 600 stretch limousine which once belonged to John Lennon, and Tony Mason test-drives the new *Subaru Legacy* (7) (5989)

9.00 *Third Root from the Sun* Harry gets depressed because he feels he has no identity or purpose (7) (851914)



Sir Frank Whittle (9.25pm)

9.25 *Horizon: Genius of the Jet* The story of the jet engine and its inventor (785758)

10.15 *Travel Show* *Essential Guide* Pauline Quirk and her husband on honeymoon in the palaces of northern India (330827)

10.28 *Shapes of the Invisible* (862001)

10.30 *Newswight* (7) (792533)

11.15 *World Figure Skating Championships* The men's free programme (310881)

12.00 *The Midnight Hour* (40711)

12.30am *Learning Zone: Open University*

Playing Safe (9044) 1.00 *Redeveloping*

New York and Los Angeles (57452) 1.00 *Communications and the Media* (84976)

4.00 *Sueños*: Spanish (45418) 5.00 *The*

Small Business Programme

7.00am *Heart of Darkness* (1984) 8.00 *Boat* (815778) 4.00 *Boat* (Voyage) 5.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 6.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 7.00 *Sports Centre* (7086732) 8.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 9.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 10.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 11.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 12.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 1.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 2.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 3.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 4.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 5.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 6.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 7.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 8.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 9.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 10.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 11.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 12.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 1.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 2.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 3.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 4.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 5.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 6.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 7.00 *World of Sport* (84295) 8.00 *World of Sport*



GOLF 50

Ballesteros given renewed hope for Ryder Cup reform

SPORT

THURSDAY MARCH 20 1997

Evans's team has point to prove

Liverpool must realise their true potential

By DAVID MILLER

LIVERPOOL and their manager, Roy Evans, have a tough act to follow. An era of almost 30 years in which the successive teams of Shankly, Paisley, Fagan — briefly — and Dalglish commanded the domestic and European football stage. Tonight and the next six weeks will show what Evans's Liverpool are made of.

The second leg of the Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final against SK Brann, of Bergen, ought to be no problem. Neither, of course, should Nottingham Forest have been in the FA Carling Premiership five days ago. Evans's Liverpool continue to hover between being outstanding and merely full of potential. Winning trophies requires potential to be realised.

Any great team is usually slightly in awe of the manager: his personality, his playing record, his tactical acumen as coach. I have the impression that Evans, as nice a man as one could meet, does not frighten his players quite enough.

Kjell Tennfjord, the Brann coach, overestimates the relative strengths of Norwegian and English football when he claims that there is "not much difference between the top of the Norwegian league and the top of the Premiership". That

is psychological warfare on behalf of his team in the Shankly mould, but it is exaggerated.

Brann are defensive, exceedingly quick on the counter-attack and, in Tore Andre Flo, have a central striker capable of troubling any defence, not least Liverpool's. They are, however, primarily a physical side without exceptional technique, cleverly exploiting the long ball. Disciplined opposition, armed with the advantage

Nigel Clough has returned to Manchester City after a three-month loan spell with Nottingham Forest. The struggling Premiership club decided not to sign Clough permanently after acquiring Pierre van Hooijdonk and Ian Moore for a total of £5.5 million last week.

tage of a 1-1 first-leg draw away from home as are Liverpool. Liverpool teams of the past would have done so. Will the present side?

As in Bergen, Collymore, a substitute against Forest, will not play. Evans preferring once again to have Berger, the rangy Czech forward, tucked in behind Fowler. Besides more accuracy in his shooting

"Brain" have proved to us what an accomplished side they are, and caused us many problems, so that we have to be right on the night now. We can take nothing for granted because there are no easy days in Europe these days."

That last comment may be a cliché, but it is all too true. The attraction of this tie against Norwegian opposition, which 20 years ago might have seen Anfield no more than two-thirds full, has produced a sell-out, the way it has been for every home match in the tournament so far.

With Wright recovered to resume a place in the back three, Ruddock, who was often in trouble against Flo in the first leg, is likely to be omitted, with Harkness the likely replacement for the ineligible Kvarme. Ruddock's exclusion might be no bad thing after his exchange of words with one or two of the Norwegians.

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MICK McCARTHY, facing a shortage of strikers before Ireland's World Cup qualifying group eight tie against Macedonia in Skopje next month, sprang a surprise yesterday when he turned to Stephen Geoghegan to solve the problem. Geoghegan, the part-time Shelbourne striker, thus became the first League of Ireland player to be picked for a competitive Ireland international since 1985.

McCarthy, the Ireland manager, had no hesitation in including Geoghegan in his final selection, especially with Niall

Quinn, of Sunderland, David Connolly, of Watford, and Keith O'Neill, of Norwich City, all ruled out by injuries. The 26-year-old has impressed in representative games playing for the league and an Ireland B side earlier this month.

"The lad is there on merit," McCarthy said yesterday. "He fully deserves his inclusion. Stephen is capable of holding the ball up and can score goals."

For his part, Geoghegan

believed his call-up for the game on April 2 could mark a breakthrough for footballers in Ireland. "This is a great

boost for myself, Shelbourne and the League of Ireland," he said. "Hopefully, it is only the tip of the iceberg, as I know there are a lot of players here knocking on the international door. For me, this has come right out of the blue. I am thrilled by the honour."

Geoghegan was previously included in an Ireland squad

back in April 1994 for the 1-0

victory over Holland in a friendly in Tilburg, but he is

stayed on the bench. He is

likely to be a substitute on this

occasion, too, with Jon Goodman, of Wimbledon, who

made his debut in the score-

less draw with Wales in Car-

diff last month, winning a

second cap alongside Tony

Casciaro up front.

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ATHLETICS 53

The runner who refused to beat a retreat



ADRIAN SHERRATT



Loughborough's Stuart Moffat beats the Brunel cover to score the only try of the British Universities final at Twickenham. Brunel won 9-8. Report, page 50

Geoghegan makes striking impression

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

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is counting on Iain Dowie to reaffirm his leadership qualities as Northern Ireland prepare for two vital World Cup qualifying matches later this month. The West Ham United forward will play a crucial role in the matches against Portugal, in Belfast on March 29, and in Kiev, against Ukraine, four days later.

Dowie, who scored both goals in Northern Ireland's 2-0 win over Albania in their last group nine qualifying match, returns after missing games against Italy and Belgium because of a broken

ankle. The Northern Ireland manager said: "I'm delighted that Iain is ready to come back as we get down to the serious business with these back-to-back qualifiers."

"He always leads by example and is a very important influence on everyone in our squad. He'll also be on his toes because we've seen young strikers perform impressively while he's been off."

Hamilton includes Kevin Horlock, of Manchester City, and Michael Hughes, of West Ham, in the squad, although they will be suspended for the

Portugal game. The manager said: "Kevin has become an increasingly influential player and Michael definitely has a match-winning talent. But we've steadily built up a good squad and I am confident those who come in won't let us down."

Hamilton knows he needs victories in both games to keep the World Cup dream alive, but said: "We've put together some good performances and I believe Portugal will be looking at us this time and envisaging a hard game. I honestly think we've the talent to beat them."

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